Y A F I L M

THE CHRISTIAN EAST

VOL. II. NEW SERIES. NO. 2. AUTUMN, 1952

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE Monastic Republic of Mount Athos is within the direct jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople and under his personal care. Numerous Patriarchs have found refuge on the Holy Mountain, either from the burden of work or from persecution in troubled times. *Orthodoxia*, the official organ of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, has recently issued information [1] with reference to plans for reorganizing the Holy Mountain, that its spiritual energies may be used to the full. A special Commission made up of the civil Governor, representatives of the ruling monasteries, of the Marshall Plan, as well as of technicians, is being formed under the presidency of a Metropolitan of the Patriarchate. The programme envisaged includes the restoration and keeping in repair of ancient monuments, the protection of the treasures of the great religious houses, with their libraries and archives. But in addition to this there are other plans for meeting the pressing need for education, the installation of a printing press, improvement of roads and communications, and of the conditions of agriculture generally. The purely ecclesiastical problems of the Republic are also to be under review: the encouragement to return to their monasteries of Religious who are at present working outside Mount Athos, the position of monks at present outside monastic Obedience, the encouragement of vocations to the monastic life, and the settlement of the problem of the Old Calendarists, which is still a live issue there.

The terms of the Commission clearly reveal the position to-day of this unique expression of Orthodox spiritual life; an expression that many Orthodox believe has the making of a microcosm of their Church. Again and again the Orthodox Church has been revivified by spiritual influences that have had their source there. Once again we may see in this movement of which the Commission is the expression the inspiration and drive of the powerful personality of the present occupant of the throne of Constantinople, and thank God for it.

Several quite outstanding events have taken place in Istanbul in the past few months that are worthy of note, since they are signs of a new attitude on the part of the Turkish government towards their Christian subjects. In particular the ancient ceremony of the public blessing of the waters at the Epiphany by the immersion of the Cross has been restored to the great joy of the Orthodox of the city. We have had occasion to mention the permission granted to the Theological Academy of Halki to admit once again students from countries outside Turkey, and the revival of the College that has resulted. The Report, printed in our last issue from one of two Anglican students who have spent some time at the Academy, one as a student and teacher of English and the other as a student only, is of interest in this

[1] 1951, No. 7, pp. 346–356.

him that every church in Constantinople has now its own Sunday school. Not least, his influence has been felt at Halki.

Last September, when John Maitland-Moir of Cuddesdon and I arrived, extensive renovations to the school buildings were in progress and, to herald in the new academic year, appeared a new Σχολάρχης and four new lecturers, three lately returned from Western European universities, and another from America.

Since last autumn His Holiness has paid visits to the school every few weeks and, as recently as the twenty-seventh of March, he mentioned in the course of an audience, which he had graciously granted to us, that changes for the better had only begun at Halki. (Incidentally, on this occasion, he also told us that the official teaching of English was to be included in the curriculum of the next academic year.) And that he should attach such importance to Halki is understandable when one considers that, except for the Universities of Athens and Salonika, and the Russian college of St. Serge in Paris, there is no other Orthodox centre for higher theological training this side of the Iron Curtain.

Let us glance at the Academy's curriculum. The following subjects are taught: The Introduction to, and exegesis of, the Old and New Testaments; Introduction to Theology; Dogmatics and History of Dogmas [1] Patrology; Principles of expounding Scripture; History of Philosophy; Ecclesiastical Law; Philosophical and Christian Ethics; Church History; Apologetics; Rhetoric (for Sermons); Hebrew and Christian antiquities; Aesthetics; Music; and Gymnastics.[2] This list of subjects (arranged according to the time allotted to each) has a far wider scope than is usual in Anglican theological colleges. Also, the average student at Halki works considerably harder than does his opposite number in England. But when I mentioned to the Principal of an English theological college how extensive was the ground covered, he expressed astonishment but asked, "Have the students time either to think or to read for themselves?" A pertinent question.

The morning of a normal working day commences with ὄρθρος at 7.30, and, after half an hour's break for food, continues with fifty minutes of study and four lectures from 9–12.30. After lunch—where the reading of Photius on the Trinity (of Bishop Buxton's day) has now given way to the Homilies of St. John Chrysostom—there are three more lectures, ἑσπερινός, and an hour and a half's free time. Two and a half hours of study, supper and compline, complete the day.

But although, as can be seen from this, there is some time to read and/or to think, as regards the reading, at any rate, the difficulty is not lack of opportunity, but rather of books; for even though there is a valuable library here, it is at present only open for some six hours a week and contains comparatively few up-to-date theological works. A small students' library does something, but hardly enough to make good this deficiency,

[1] It is noticeable how far the teaching of Dogma consists in the presentation of the relevant passages in the Fathers; and how small a part is played by general or philosophical presuppositions—Scripture and Tradition being thought unquestionable and sufficient.

[2] There is also instruction in Liturgies, History of Religions, and Pastoralia, but not this year.

while books that may be found in Constantinople are always excessively dear. Necessarily, therefore, much time at Halki is spent in the copying-out, the learning and (in the case of at least one professor) the learning by heart, of quantities of notes. Easy access to books is one advantage the English ordinand has over the Greek student at Halki. A second great difference is the omission here of specific teaching about, or time set apart for, private or mental prayer. Also there is little sign of the personal relationship between staff and student to which we, in England, are accustomed, though a few members of the staff are now doing their best to bridge the gulf. Yet a fourth distinction is the absence of emphasis at Halki on pastoral training, although in this connection one must remember that the object of the training is not so much to produce parish priests as church leaders. But perhaps the most immediately striking difference is that while, in Britain, the stress may be primarily on the individual, here it is entirely on the community as a whole.

The students sleep in dormitories; eat the excellent food all together and in silence; from time to time are all medically examined, and have their time carefully and strictly arranged for them. Whatever else a student here may learn he very soon sees the advantage of doing as did Harry Graham's nurse who "kept quiet and kept her place, lyin' low and sayin' nuffin'." The lack of silence and solitude, which is characteristic of Halki, may seem grave disadvantages to English readers; but a situation which might be thought intolerable is entirely saved by the charm of our fellow-students, who, though they come from all kinds of backgrounds, and homes as far apart as Constantinople and Crete, Athens and Imbros, Cyprus and Northern Greece, are alike in their kindliness, understanding and courtesy towards "the stranger within their gate."

Symeon's dictum that truth stands neither in the middle way, nor in one extreme, but in both extremes, seems to me to be applicable to both types of instruction. But each extreme of training has also its dangers. Individualism may easily degenerate into a self-containment perilously close to pride; whilst stress on the community and lack of personal touch may, at worst, be productive of a type of superior sheep, instead of the shepherds the church needs. Certainly Anselm's advice to an abbot sometimes seems apt. "Tell me, my Lord abbot," he wrote, "if you planted a tree in your garden, and tied it up on all sides, . . . what sort of a tree would it turn out when, after some years, you gave it room to spread? . . . If you suit yourselves to your weak and your strong ones, by God's grace, you shall, as far as lies in you, win them all for God."

Yet, criticize the Orthodox instruction as we may, there is one truth they have laid firm hold of (and this undoubtedly the most important truth of all). The church is indeed a focal point of life, and the incomparable three-hour liturgy—sung beautifully by the students—the weekly climax.

In England one senses a cut and driedness about the services and often feels that the only thing that stops the churchgoer from continually glancing at his watch is his good manners; there is none of this breathlessness and timelessness.

Forgive me if I end with a story to illustrate the two approaches. An

American Episcopalian was attending a service on Easter Day at the Orthodox Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The church was full, but at the climax the crowd pressed eagerly forward, leaving a space at the back empty. In this space the American noticed some children begin a game of hide and seek round the pillars, whilst a church official looked on benignly. The Episcopalian approached him and angrily asked him why he did not stop them. "What!" was the astonished reply, "and where may children play if not in their Father's House?"

March 5th, 1952 DAVID WHITAKER.

JERUSALEM AFTER CHALCEDON

A.D. 451—518

IT was with dark forebodings that bishops and monks of Palestine had accompanied the Archbishop Juvenal to Chalcedon. In still darker haste did they return. The monk Theodosius appears to have been the first to arrive, crying out to the imperial lady Eudocia, to the monastic aristocracy of Jerusalem, to Peter the Iberian prince-monk on the Gaza seaboard, and to all and sundry up and down the land, against the treason of Juvenal—Juvenal, who two years before had been hand in glove with Dioscorus at Ephesus, and had now deserted his old ally; Juvenal, who had gone to the council anathematizing the Tome of Leo, and calling on his followers to repudiate him if he ever did otherwise; Juvenal, concerning whom, years before, the priest Pelagius had prophesied on Golgotha that he who then was being led in triumph by the clergy and the monks, would one day be so led by the Romans and the demons.

His inflammatory reports swept the country. With Peter the Iberian, the archimandrite Romanus from Tekoa, and a crowd of monks so great that the governor dared not allow them to enter Cæsarea, he went down to remonstrate with Juvenal on his arrival. The latter, seeing the situation, returned to Constantinople. Theodosius, with Eudocia's support, was raised to the throne of St. James, and set about consecrating other bishops for sees whose rightful occupants had fled or failed to return.

Two of the signatories of the council had also come back "at a run" (says Cyril of Scythopolis). Stephen of Jamnia had been a monk in the laura where Euthymius ruled, eight miles down from Jerusalem into the freedom of the wilderness: John was bishop of the Arab tribe which owed its conversion to the saint. They had signed with Juvenal—but that would not lessen their trepidation. John's predecessor Auxolaus, two years before, had also signed with Juvenal—at the "Robber Council" of Ephesus. Returning, he had died of the saint's displeasure (ἐν ἀγανακτήσει). Now at Chalcedon they had done much more than renounce the Robber Council: they had signed, under considerable pressure, a dogmatic statement whose language was at least unwonted, and accepted the Tome of Leo which Juvenal himself had rejected a few months before: and they had reinstated two bishops who were strongly suspected of Nestorianism. They brought down the definition to Euthymius in fear lest they also should fall under his displeasure (δεδιότες μὴ ἀγανακτηθῶσιν).

But forty years and more in that bony wilderness had given Euthymius a longer and a calmer and clearer view than was common in the tense atmosphere of the city. He was not concerned with the manner in which the council was carried through—only with the orthodoxy of the document which bore his clients' signature. And this he found unexceptionable. So when Theodosius's envoys, Elpidius and Gerontius—the recognized heads of the monks of Jerusalem—came down to seek his support for the intruder, they found here at least a rock unshakable on which the waves of Theodosius's fanaticism broke in vain. And one of the two, Elpidius (successor of the great Passarion), though he did not yet break with Theodosius, was in fact convinced by Euthymius's defence of the Chalcedonian formula. Already the tide begins to turn in favour of the council.

Theodosius continued his pressure until Euthymius took refuge in the farther desert towards the Dead Sea. Thither came others also, from both sides, fleeing from the turmoil of the times in search of the true monastic quiet. Not a few opponents of the council among them were gradually won over by the saint's calm reasoning—notable among them the Lycian Gerasimus, whose monastery in the Jordan Plain represents a somewhat different monastic tradition from that of the mountainous wilderness.

It was well on in A.D. 353 when Juvenal returned with imperial force to recover his throne. Theodosius, whose usurpation appears not to have been altogether peaceful from the first, now offered armed resistance, and was defeated in something like a pitched battle fought at Nablus between his monks and the Roman troops, who for once had Samaritan support.

The execrated Juvenal had achieved the kernel of his ambition—not indeed the supremacy of Jerusalem over Antioch which he had claimed at the First Council of Ephesus, and apparently been allowed at the brigandage; but at least the independent authority of his see over the three provinces of Palestine, accepted by Maximus of Antioch, which established Jerusalem in its position, recognized ever since, as the Fifth Patriarchate of Christendom. But it was a chastened Juvenal who returned. The monophysite writers themselves show him dignified, humble, and generous, in the face of the repeated insults heaped upon him by the opponents of the council. Not unnaturally, the prime movers of the revolt were exiled—Theodosius himself fled, but was finally caught at the gate of Antioch disguised as a soldier, and confined in a monastery in Constantinople (though the Emperor appears to have done his best to conciliate him first). He died at Galata shortly after the accession of Leo in A.D. 457. The bishops intruded by him were removed. Peter the Iberian, whom he had consecrated Bishop of Maiouma, went voluntarily into Egypt, where he was rebuked from heaven for "cutting" an old friend who had accepted the council. Romanus (whose leading part in the revolt, ignored by Cyril of Scythopolis, becomes clear from monophysite sources) was relegated to Antioch. Gerontius, we are told, experienced bonds and imprisonment, and was brought before judges. But the bulk of the opposition appears to have remained undisturbed.

No doubt they had the protection of Eudocia, who still held aloof from the council. But the tragic events to her offspring in Italy in A.D. 455, and

a series of letters from the Pope and her kinsfolk, caused her to think again. She chose a "neutral" cleric, the chorepiscop Anastasius (another disciple of Passarion), to submit her doubts to St. Symeon the Stylite, who referred her back to the saint at her doors—to Euthymius. And under his somewhat begrudged instruction, she was reunited to Juvenal and the established Church, bringing Elpidius and a crowd of monks and laity in her train, and appealing to other recalcitrants and exiles to do likewise. Gerontius on the Mount of Olives remained obdurate—perhaps it was now that, intreated at least to consent to *meet* Juvenal, if not to communicate with him, he answered "God forbid that I should see the face of Judas the traitor." Marcian left the community of Elpidius to found his own cœnobium near Bethlehem. Romanus wrote to Eudocia from Antioch to describe how, when news of Chalcedon had first arrived, and the monks had resorted to him at Tekoa as their common father, he had withdrawn into the wilderness for prayer, and had at last, on his third withdrawal, extracted from heaven an unambiguous anathema on the council.

But at least Juvenal felt strong enough, now, to join with Eudocia in an appeal to the Emperor for an amnesty for Romanus and the other exiles—an appeal which seems to have been successful, though it is not clear whether there was time for it to be put into effect before the death of the Emperor Marcian early in A.D. 457. In any case Romanus was returned well before the death of Juvenal, which appears to have occurred on July 1st, A.D. 459. But embarrassed by the fact that his Tekoan monastery lay in the diocese of Jerusalem, and therefore directly under the jurisdiction of Juvenal, and because bad men were disturbing the peace of the neighbouring village, he transferred himself to a hill-top to the west of Eleutheropolis, on a property belonging to Eudocia, who, in spite of her acceptance of Chalcedon, persuaded him to build there a great and beautiful monastery.

The easing of tension in Jerusalem at this time was endorsed by the new Emperor, Leo, who was prepared to raise the whole question of Chalcedon afresh. Even when the Egyptian monophysites, in the first months of his reign, taking the law into their own hands, consecrated a successor (Timothy "the Cat") to Dioscorus dead in exile, and murdered the Chalcedonian Patriarch Proterius, he was unwilling to act without consulting the universal episcopate. And Pope St. Leo himself was not unready to be conciliatory, writing a letter to the Emperor which, while safeguarding Orthodoxy, avoided the phrases in dispute. Timothy refused all conciliation, but he remained in possession of his see for three years. It was only in A.D. 460 that he was sent into exile and replaced by a very moderate and gentle Chalcedonian. It was in accordance with the spirit of the time that, on Juvenal's death, the "neutral" Anastasius was raised, "by the vote of the whole people," to the throne of St. James.

The last years of Juvenal had seen a considerable influx to the Holy City of young aspirants to the monastic life, including many of the future champions of Orthodoxy. Theodosius, the future cœnobiarch, and Theognius had both arrived, and sought out Chalcedonian tutors, when the opponents of the council were still predominant in the monasteries of Jeru-

salem and of the wilderness. Sabas, in the autumn of A.D. 456, had joined himself first to the monastery of St. Passarion when its abbot, Elpidius, had only recently returned to the Patriarch's communion. It was with Elpidius's blessing that he went on, the following year, to seek the guidance of Euthymius. The disturbances in Egypt in the same year (A.D. 457) seem to have occasioned a considerable exodus of peace-loving monks to Palestine. The two future patriarchs, Martyrius and Elias, came from Nitria to St. Euthymius. In the anti-Chalcedonian connection, it was probably at an earlier date that the great ascetic teacher and writer, Abba Esaias, came from Scetis first to Eleutheropolis and then to the Gaza region.

Little is recorded of the general history of the Church in Palestine during the remaining years of the Emperor Leo. Euthymius showed a suggestive reserve towards Anastasius, respectfully excusing himself from receiving a visit from the Patriarch, and only meeting him at the funeral of his friend Theoctistus, at his Lower Monastery in the Wady Mukellik in A.D. 466. Anastasius, on the other hand, showed marked attention to the saint, and on his death in A.D. 473, came down twice to the Laura for his obsequies. The important office of "Keeper of the Cross" was throughout his patriarchate occupied by disciples of Euthymius. But Gerontius on Olivet and Marcian at Bethlehem remained centres of strong opposition to the council. Romanus flourished near Eleutheropolis. And Peter the Iberian, returning to Palestine during these years, seems to have conducted successful propaganda up and down the land. The publication of the Encyclical of the usurper Basiliscus in A.D. 475, with its clear anathema on Chalcedon, strengthened the hands of this party, whose power grew to be such that Anastasius not only accepted the Encyclical, but appears to have refused assent to its withdrawal shortly afterwards in the "Antencyclical" which, with no express mention of Chalcedon, proclaimed a return to the "status quo." When Anastasius died in A.D. 478, and was succeeded by Martyrius, whose old connection with St. Euthymius may have been remembered against him, Gerontius and the opponents of the Synod, relying still on the Encyclical, threatened violent revolt, and it seemed clear that something must be done.

Cyril of Scythopolis tells us how Martyrius wrote rather too freely (παρρησιαστικώτερον) to the Emperor Zeno and the Patriarch Acacius of Constantinople, sending the letters by the deacon Fidus. Fidus was shipwrecked on the way, and in answer to his cry for help, Euthymius appeared to him on the sea, with the words of the angel to Balaam, "Thy way is not comely (οὐκ αστεία ἡ ὁδός σου) before God"—Fidus's journey to Constantinople would not bring profit to the Mother of Churches: let him go back and tell Martyrius to have no anxiety about the Aposchists; for complete union would be coming from the Lord in a few days, and in his hierarchy there would be in Jerusalem one flock under one shepherd. Miraculously, Fidus found himself back in Jerusalem. He reported to the Patriarch, then set to work, in obedience to the saint's command, to carry through the conversion of his Laura into a cœnobium—a process which was completed in three years, so that Martyrius could come down to consecrate the new Church on May 7th, A.D. 482. Meanwhile, the saint's

promise had been fulfilled. "A few days" after Fidus's return, Marcian, the leader of the Aposchists, had called them together at Bethlehem, and proposed to cast lots as between the bishops and the monks, "and if the lot go to the monks, let us remain as we are: but if to the bishops, let us enter into communion with the Church." The lot fell for the bishops, and the whole company with one consent came into the Holy City and were received by the Archbishop, and all the lights of the Holy Anastasis were lit for the great festival of reunion. Only Gerontius and Romanus remained in opposition.

Cyril does not, however, reveal that any conditions were attached to this reunion. But in Syriac translation, in the works of the monophysite historian Zacharias Scholasticus, we find what appears evidently to be Martyrius's speech on this occasion. It contains an anathema on every one who holds any other doctrine than that of Nicæa, "wherever it arose, whether at Ariminum or at Sardica or at Chalcedon or at any other place." The words are equivalent to those of the Henotikon of Zeno, "And we anathematize every one who thinks or has thought otherwise either now or ever before, either at Chalcedon or in any synod whatsoever." It seems clear that Martyrius in A.D. 479, yielding to apparent necessities, had set the pattern for a compromise which was to be followed in A.D. 482 by Zeno and Acacius, in a formula which cast a slur on the Council of Chalcedon without expressly condemning it. This was the line to be adopted in the Eastern Empire as the basis of policy for over thirty years in an effort to unite all moderate men without enforcing the terms of a document which was genuinely regarded as suspect. Passions were running high, and it was extremely doubtful whether any real difference of faith lay behind the conflicting terms. Men must be given time to think.

In Palestine at least, as a temporary expedient, the policy was not ineffective. A man like Marcian, who after many years of opposition to the council, had hardly been brought to accept the compromise, quickly found himself in close friendship and confident co-operation with convinced Chalcedonians like Theodosius and Sabas (who established their two great monasteries within the next ten years). A more articulate unity of faith would follow in due course.

Cyril and Zacharias agree that Martyrius expelled those who did not accept the union.

Cyril, who speaks of Marcian's reconciliation as "the Second Union" (implying that the First was the reconciliation of Eudocia and Elpidius), says that Gerontius was expelled at this time from Olivet, and Romanus from Tekoa. But Romanus had certainly gone to his Eleutheropolis monastery (where he died in peace) twenty years before. And Gerontius cannot have long survived the event. Cyril also tells us of the expulsion at this time of two monophysite monks who had succeeded to the tower on Jebel Muntar where Eudocia had received the instruction of Euthymius (yet another hint that, in her reconciliation with Juvenal, she did not break off all her connections with the recalcitrants). It would appear that opposition to Martyrius was silenced in Jerusalem—Peter the Iberian, spending one summer about now (perhaps A.D. 482) on an old property of Eudocia's five

miles out, would not enter the Holy City even by night. But in the Philistine Plain, and at Eleutheropolis, the opponents of compromise held their ground. At the same time, in Palestine at least, such evidence as we have seems to show little bitterness between the parties—the Henoticists conciliatory, the Aposchists courteous. And perhaps sometimes personal loyalties played a larger part than deep-set doctrinal convictions. The great Abba Esaias was attached to the Aposchist party. But when questioned by two Chalcedonian monks, he shocked and embarrassed his disciple, Peter the Egyptian, by telling them that there was no harm in the Synod, and they were very well as they were. It was no doubt for ascetic reasons, rather than out of intransigence, that he and Peter the Iberian avoided compliance, in A.D. 487, with Zeno's summons to conversations in Constantinople. A monophysite, writing in the last years of Anastasius, when passions were once more aroused, could look back to these decades as a time when the schism was regarded by the people of the Churches as one between brethren, and not deeply affecting the Faith.

Martyrius died in April, A.D. 486. At one with the policy of Acacius of Constantinople, he had accepted the synodicals both of Peter Mongus of Alexandria and of Peter the Fuller of Antioch. But we have no sufficient ground for classing him, as is often done (*pace* the evidence of Cyril of Scythopolis), among the confirmed enemies of Chalcedon. His successor, Sallust, appears to have followed the same policy, though we know little of him. He appears to have supported the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch against the Chalcedonian Euphemius of Constantinople under the new Emperor Anastasius. And we should not pay great heed to the statement of the Jacobite historian, Michael the Syrian, that he "separated and was with Rome"—though we should like to know its origin. But it was he who ordained Sabas to the priesthood in A.D. 490, and appointed first Marcian, then on his death (in November, A.D. 492) Theodosius and Sabas, to be archimandrites over all the monks of the wilderness. Their appointment suggests a move in the Chalcedonian direction which becomes more marked when on Sallust's death in June, A.D. 494, his successor Elias comes out clearly for Euphemius, breaking thereby both with Alexandria and with Antioch at a time when the Patriarchs of both these sees were openly anathematizing Chalcedon, and the religious emperor Anastasius, though in policy striving to adhere to the *via media* of the Henotikon, could not conceal his personal monophysite convictions. Rome was holding aloof in the West because of the Henotikon. And the Emperor was working to get rid of Euphemius from Constantinople. So Elias's stand was taken at a moment when it looked as if his Church might soon find itself as a result in complete isolation. Actually, when Euphemius was extruded in A.D. 496, his successor, Macedonius, proved equally Chalcedonian in conviction—so that Elias accepted his synodicals, while not thereby assenting to the deposition of his predecessor. And when, not more than two years later, Flavian succeeded Palladius at Antioch, and refused the demand of John of Alexandria for an anathema on the council, three out of the four Eastern patriarchates were united on the Chalcedonian side, against the desire of the Emperor. But for ten years a truce continued on the lines of the Henotikon,

the Patriarchs not demanding positive subscription to the council, nor the Emperor an anathema thereon. Alexandria, while accepting the Henotikon as a sop to the Emperor, was out of communion with the other Patriarchates.

Meanwhile Sabas was "making a city of the wilderness," planting his disciples on cliff-side and hill-top up and down that stark land. In a few years the numbers of the monks who looked to him and Theodosius as their leaders began to assume Egyptian proportions. It was an international crowd, as was to be expected in the Holy Land: and several languages—Greek, Armenian,[1] Bessic, Syriac, etc.—could be heard in liturgical use alongside each other in the churches of a single monastery. Thus they were saved from provincialism. And, while the desert bound them to eternity, the cities of the Incarnation along the western sky-line above them kept them wedded to history. Here, if anywhere on earth, was a force to which one would look for a true balance of Orthodoxy. The story is told of the Egyptian monk John, who during this period founded the monastery of Chouziba in the Wady Qelt, and later became Archbishop of Cæsarea (but finally returned to his monastery), how he was supernaturally prevented from approaching the Holy Sepulchre until he had renounced his opposition to the council.

But the opposition around Gaza and Eleutheropolis continued to hold its own. Here also a new generation had arisen, its core a group of former law students from Beirut, who had taken the habit about A.D. 490, within a short time of the death of the old leaders, Peter the Iberian and the Abba Esaias. Outstanding among these was Severus.

Trouble began about A.D. 508. Nephalius, a fire-brand monk who had roused extreme monophysite opposition against Peter Mongus in Alexandria in A.D. 486, now appeared on the Chalcedonian side in Palestine, expelling, or threatening to expel, the Aposchist monks from their monasteries on the Gaza sea-board. Severus was sent as their representative to Constantinople to appeal to the Emperor. No doubt his legal training stood him in good stead. And he had friends at court. He stayed for three years in the imperial city. And he did a great deal more than get his friends restored to their monasteries. He appears to have attained a complete personal ascendancy over the Emperor which was to alter the course of the remaining years of his reign. Working at high pressure in writing and speaking, fervent in faith and quite unscrupulous in method, he spread his propaganda around the court, setting the stage for the Emperor's expulsion of the Patriarch Macedonius in August, A.D. 511. The monophysite party hoped to get Severus himself as his successor. But the temper of the populace of the city made this clearly impossible. Though a known monophysite, Timothy, was in fact installed, he did not dare, even with the Emperor's support, openly to anathematize Chalcedon—so that Flavian and Elias, while they could not approve the deposition of Macedonius, found Timothy's synodicals unexceptionable. Severus returned to his

[1] When Sabas found that some of the Armenians in his Laura were introducing the monophysite addition into the Trisagion when they sang it in their own language, he ordered that that hymn should be sung in Greek.

monastery—though not for long. His opinion of Timothy is expressed in his letters.

Elias foresaw that the Emperor would now bring pressure to bear on himself and Flavian, and that this would inevitably upset the peace of the Church in Jerusalem. Knowing Anastasius's reverence for monks, he sent Sabas, in the autumn of A.D. 411, to look after his interests at court through the coming winter. While Sabas was still on his way, a synod was convoked on the Emperor's orders at Sidon, where Philoxenus of Mabbug, who had long been working to oust Flavian, strove (with Severus in support) to obtain from him and Elias either an anathema on Chalcedon, or something that would embroil them with the Emperor. But the two Patriarchs outwitted their adversaries, and the synod was dismissed having accomplished nothing —though Elias did at this time go to the extreme of concession in writing to the Emperor that he rejected every heresy that introduces any novelty against the Orthodox faith, "not accepting (*οὐ προσιέμενοι*) even the things done in Chalcedon because of the scandals that have arisen therefrom." Philoxenus and his friends sent violent reports to Anastasius, but Sabas was in fact able to appease for the time being the Emperor's angry suspicions in regard to Elias.

Sabas won another victory at this time which greatly strengthened the Orthodox position in Palestine. Mamas was archimandrite of Romanus's monastery by Eleutheropolis, and had been, it seems, one of Severus's early instructors in the monastic life. He had come up to Constantinople with Severus, but had quarrelled with him there.[2] Sabas, returning to Jerusalem in May, A.D. 512, took Mamas with him to Elias, and persuaded him to accept Chalcedon and Catholic communion. Many others followed his example—though the monastery of Romanus seems itself to have remained in the hands of Severus's party.

Meanwhile in Syria, Philoxenus and his friends were able to stir up trouble which led to Flavian's deposition and exile to Petra. Severus was elected in his place, and brought by imperial command from his Gaza retreat to occupy the throne of Antioch (November, A.D. 512). He immediately sent out synodicals anathematizing Chalcedon. When Elias rejected these, Severus reported to the Emperor, then sent the same synodicals again to Jerusalem, in May, A.D. 513, with some clerics and an imperial escort. This time Sabas and the other monastic leaders came up and drove the bearers of the synodicals out of the Holy City. They assembled the whole multitude of the monks, with the people of Jerusalem, before Calvary, and there, in the presence of the officers and soldiers of the escort, all cried out "Anathema on Severus and those who hold communion with him."

The show of force won the Patriarch a respite. Anastasius seems genuinely to have tried to avoid bloodshed in religious strife. Moreover, he

[2] Severus would seem to have been one of those who can both attract passionate loyalty from their followers and cause bitter disillusionment. Zacharias the Scholasticus had been a friend of his from student days, and wrote a biographical dialogue in his defence, while he was still in possession at Antioch. But the tolerance and gentleness shown in this work is in sharp contrast with the character shown in Severus's own letters. And herein we may find the explanation how the convinced monophysite Zacharias could later become Chalcedonian Bishop of Mitylene. In both his case and that of Mamas, the discovery of the things of which Severus was capable may well have wrought the change.

was soon fully occupied with the revolt of Vitalian, and then (in accordance with the terms concluded with Vitalian) with abortive negotiations with Rome for union; then with the renewed revolt of Vitalian, who was only defeated at the end of A.D. 515. Meanwhile the violence of the monophysite rule in Syria (it did not represent the bulk of the population) was increasing. Palestine became a refuge for those who, like Julian, bishop of Bostra, went into exile rather than accept Severus. Jerusalem was once more standing alone among the Eastern Patriarchates. The monastic leaders looked round for support from outside, and sent a long account of the situation (quoted extensively by Evagrius) to Alcison of Nicopolis, the leader of the Epirote bishops who at this time were appealing to the Pope against the monophysite Archbishop of Thessalonica.

At last in A.D. 516 the Emperor felt strong enough to act again according to his convictions. The Epirote bishops were summoned to Constantinople, where Alcison died. And the Duke of Palestine, Olympus of Cæsarea, was sent, armed with Elias's "œconomic" letter from the time of the Council of Sidon, to remove the Patriarch by hook or by crook. Olympus produced the letter—no doubt to embroil its writer with his more uncompromising monastic followers—and Elias was carried off into exile at Aila (Aqaba). John, a deacon of the Anastasis, was installed in his place on September 1st, having promised to anathematize Chalcedon and accept Severus's communion. But when it came to the point he dared not carry out his promise in face of the monastic host. On hearing this, the Emperor removed Olympus, and sent Anastasius, son of Pamphilus, in his place as Duke, to obtain John's submission. The Duke, taking John unawares, placed him in the public prison—to the delight of the people, who regarded him as a traitor to Elias who had ordained him. John, in his dilemma, adopted the ruse secretly proposed to him by the civil governor, Zacharias. He offered to do what was required of him on the coming Sunday provided he was released from prison two days before, so that he should not appear to be acting under compulsion. Emerging on these terms, he sent messages during the night to assemble the monks. And when the Sunday came, a crowd of some ten thousand was gathered at the great Church of St. Stephen —no church inside the walls was large enough for such a multitude—to welcome the Emperor's nephew, Hypatius. The outcome was inevitable. When John mounted the ambon Theodosius and Sabas were on either side of him. The protracted cries of the vast assembly demanded anathema on the heretics, and ratification of the Council. The three with one voice proclaimed anathema on Nestorius, Eutyches, Severus and Soterichus, and all who did not accept Chalcedon. When they came down from the ambon, Theodosius (who was by now well over eighty years old) turned back to add, "If any does not accept the Four Councils even as the Four Gospels, let him be anathema."

The Duke fled to Cæsarea. Hypatius hastily persuaded the fathers of his orthodoxy—he had not communicated with Severus, but had come eager to receive their communion.

Anastasius, on receiving the news, prepared to send force to banish John and Theodosius and Sabas. When this became known in Jerusalem the whole concourse of the monks of the Holy City and its wilderness and the

Jordan sent a lengthy letter of protest to the Emperor, which is preserved in full by Cyril of Scythopolis in the Life of St. Sabas, and in part by Theodore of Petra in his panegyric on St. Theodosius—Christ had entrusted the empire to Anastasius, wishing to bring the great blessing of peace to all the Churches, but especially to Sion the Mother of All Churches, wherein the great mystery of true religion had been manifested and fulfilled for the world's salvation, and beginning from Jerusalem had, through the divine and evangelical preaching, brought to dawn upon all the ends of the earth the light of truth. "Of this precious and surpassing mystery of Christ all we dwellers in this Holy Land have, by the precious Cross the giver of victory, and by the Life-giving Anastasis, and indeed by all the Holy Places which we venerate, kept, and by Grace of God will keep for ever, intact and unassailed in Christ, the true and unimaginary confession and faith which we have received from of old and from the beginning, handed down through the blessed and holy Apostles." How was it that now, under Anastasius, Sion the Mother of All Churches, and the Holy Anastasius of our God and Saviour, the refuge and sanctuary of all those from all the world who suffer wrong and need salvation, was being turned into a public market and common place, bishops and clergy and monks being thrust with violence out of Holy Sion and the Anastasis, in the sight of gentiles and Jews and Samaritans, and dragged through the midst of the city to profane and unclean places, and compelled to do things to the hurt of the Faith, so that pilgrims who came for prayer and edification were going home to their own countries scandalized? If it was for the sake of the Faith that all these things were being moved against the Holy City of God, Jerusalem, the eye and luminary of all the world, which received the word of the Gospel—the dwellers therein were daily as it were with their own hands handling the Truth by means of those same venerable places wherein the mystery of the Incarnation of our great God and Saviour was performed—"How then, after five hundred years and more since the Advent of the Christ, are we men of Jerusalem *learning* the Faith?" Clearly the "correction" now being made to the Faith was not of Christ but of Antichrist. Severus was the source of all the trouble. If life and death were in the scale in a matter of Faith they would choose death. Ten thousand deaths would not persuade the dwellers in the Holy Land to be united to any who did not follow the unique and apostolic Faith which had come down to them through the Four Councils. The blood of all of them would gladly be poured out, and all the Holy Places consumed with fire, before any such thing should take place in this Holy City of God.

By the time the letter was sent, Timothy of Constantinople had already died and been succeeded by John (April, A.D. 518). Anastasius, again preoccupied with trouble from Vitalian, sent to Theodosius a somewhat evasive disclaimer of responsibility for the troubles, inveighing against those who make the mystery no mystery.

But his time was short. He died during a violent thunderstorm on the night of July 9th–10th. Elias, whom Sabas was visiting at Aila, revealed to his guests what had happened, and prophesied his own death ten days later—on July 20th (the day kept in the Eastern Church as the Feast of the Prophet Elias). Flavian of Antioch had at Petra the same knowledge. The

two Patriarchs sent messages to each other—"Anastasius has died to-day. Let us also go, that we may be judged with him."

On August 6th the synod of bishops of Palestine, with Sabas and a vast crowd of monks and laity, gathered in festival at Jerusalem to receive the orders of the new Emperor Justin, and to inscribe in the diptychs the Four Councils.

From the moment when Severus was raised to the throne of Antioch, the policy of the Henotikon had been proved bankrupt—there was no middle way left between acceptance and rejection of Chalcedon. Once more, it might seem, Rome's long and lonely stand for the strict Catholic Faith had been vindicated. But is that the whole truth? Whatever names might be omitted from the diptychs for the sake of unity, Eastern Orthodox Christendom could never really believe that men who had died in exile for the faith of Chalcedon—Euphemius and Macedonius, Flavian and Elias—had died outside Catholic communion, or that the Church of the Eastern Patriarchates had ceased to be the Catholic Church during the ambiguous period of the Henotikon—a very fruitful period for the Church in many fields, and pregnant for the future.[3] And the gradual process which culminated in the moment when successors of Marcian and of Romanus stood beside Sabas and Theodosius to proclaim Chalcedon against the Emperor, surely bears the stamp of the Holy Spirit's working *within* the Church.

It was not just political necessity that drove convinced Chalcedonians to offer and accept the Henotikon, but a real sense that, while the colder intellectual distinctions are vital to the Faith of the Church, there was something on the other side—the warm devotion of opponents of the council to Christ our Brother, God who died for us—which belonged rightly to the Church, and need not and must not be lost. Chalcedon was right; but the terms of its balance were unwonted. Rome's clear stand for the Faith authoritatively proclaimed was admirable; but it offered no bridge to those other sheep. The Eastern Chalcedonian was ready, without losing his own conviction, to come down to the level of their uncertainty. The authority of the council was not diminished by its having to bide its time until it found its confirmation in the hearts of the faithful. And perhaps the Eastern was always more deeply conscious of the inadequacy of all definition. His appeal was to Jerusalem, as to the Heart of History and of the Church's prayer. In such an appeal there must be no hasty seeking for an answer to our questions—no listening to voices, "Lo, here is Christ," or "Lo, there." This oracle speaks most often by silence. But when its voice is heard it is like the lightning which shines from one end of the heavens to the other. For it speaks from the inmost heart of every Christian.

D. J. CHITTY.

[3] E.g., Sabas's organization during these years of the Judæan wilderness is one of the primary influences in Eastern Orthodox Monasticism. Romanus's great outpouring of Christian song began under Anastasius. And the Church did not shrink from adopting to herself the labours and inventions of opponents of the council during this period. It was Peter the Fuller who introduced the regular recitation of the Creed in the Liturgy. Orthodox monks of the circle of Barsanuphius and John, in the next generation, dwelling by Gaza on a site once occupied by Peter the Iberian, were not ashamed to recognize their debt to the Abba Esaias, whose manner of solitary life they copied, and whose ascetic works (which they constantly quote) survive in Greek as well as in Syriac. And surely there has been profit as well as danger in the vast influence on the Church of the pseudo-Areopagitic writings palmed off upon her by Severus.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY THE FAITH PRESS, LTD., LEIGHTON BUZZARD

THE CHRISTIAN EAST

VOL. II. NEW SERIES. NO. 2. AUTUMN, 1952

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE Monastic Republic of Mount Athos is within the direct jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople and under his personal care. Numerous Patriarchs have found refuge on the Holy Mountain, either from the burden of work or from persecution in troubled times. *Orthodoxia*, the official organ of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, has recently issued information [1] with reference to plans for reorganizing the Holy Mountain, that its spiritual energies may be used to the full. A special Commission made up of the civil Governor, representatives of the ruling monasteries, of the Marshall Plan, as well as of technicians, is being formed under the presidency of a Metropolitan of the Patriarchate. The programme envisaged includes the restoration and keeping in repair of ancient monuments, the protection of the treasures of the great religious houses, with their libraries and archives. But in addition to this there are other plans for meeting the pressing need for education, the installation of a printing press, improvement of roads and communications, and of the conditions of agriculture generally. The purely ecclesiastical problems of the Republic are also to be under review: the encouragement to return to their monasteries of Religious who are at present working outside Mount Athos, the position of monks at present outside monastic Obedience, the encouragement of vocations to the monastic life, and the settlement of the problem of the Old Calendarists, which is still a live issue there.

The terms of the Commission clearly reveal the position to-day of this unique expression of Orthodox spiritual life; an expression that many Orthodox believe has the making of a microcosm of their Church. Again and again the Orthodox Church has been revivified by spiritual influences that have had their source there. Once again we may see in this movement of which the Commission is the expression the inspiration and drive of the powerful personality of the present occupant of the throne of Constantinople, and thank God for it.

Several quite outstanding events have taken place in Istanbul in the past few months that are worthy of note, since they are signs of a new attitude on the part of the Turkish government towards their Christian subjects. In particular the ancient ceremony of the public blessing of the waters at the Epiphany by the immersion of the Cross has been restored to the great joy of the Orthodox of the city. We have had occasion to mention the permission granted to the Theological Academy of Halki to admit once again students from countries outside Turkey, and the revival of the College that has resulted. The Report, printed in our last issue from one of two Anglican students who have spent some time at the Academy, one as a student and teacher of English and the other as a student only, is of interest in this

[1] 1951, No. 7, pp. 346–356.

connection. Finally the news comes of a modification in the law established in Turkey some eighteen or nineteen years ago forbidding the wearing of ecclesiastical dress by any other than indigenous heads of religion. The writer has a very vivid remembrance of the consternation brought about by the imposing of the law and of the confusion it caused in the habits and life of the clergy of the city, made more conspicuous in the case of the Orthodox by their dress and monastic customs.

The Orthodox Church in Syria and the Lebanon merits our interest, if only because it represents another element in Orthodox Church life, as well as the Hellenic and Slav. The ancient and apostolic Patriarchate of Antioch has its beginnings in an earlier age than any of the historic centres of Christianity, whether of the East or the West. Its history for many centuries now has been that of a little-regarded Christian minority, its church life and the education of its clergy at a low ebb. Our interest in this country has been awakened by the Youth Movement among young Orthodox that was organized with the approval of the hierarchy some ten years ago, and which is growing in numbers and influence. It has many difficulties to overcome, not least the conservatism of the native clergy. We are hoping to publish material and information in *The Christian East*, bearing on this important subject.

We were greatly privileged to welcome the Metropolitan of Aleppo as a guest of the Association on a fortnight's visit to this country in August. A fuller account of his visit will, it is hoped, appear in our next issue.

It is with great sorrow that we have to record the passing of the Serbian Bishop Ireney of Dalmatia, an old friend of this country, and a patriotic champion of his people during the last War, who had been living since then in exile in this country with so many of his fellow-countrymen. This their loss follows swiftly on the joy of the consecration of the Serbian Church in London, of which we publish a short account below—an occasion which brought back to us once more the beloved Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, whose preaching as a priest in London towards the end of the First World War was effective in bringing the reality of the Orthodox Church before the minds of very many for the first time.

We greatly regret the delay in the publication of this issue, caused unavoidably by the illness of the Editor, to whom we offer our sympathy and best wishes for a speedy recovery. Meanwhile, responsibility for this issue has been undertaken by another member of the Committee.

Eastern Churches Broadsheet

THE HALLOWING OF ST. SAVA'S CATHEDRAL IN LONDON

ON June 28th and 29th the former parish church of St. Columb's, Notting Hill, was set apart for use as a Cathedral for the Serbian Orthodox by Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, known so well to so many of the older generation of the Association, and friend of so many of us. St. Columb's, Notting Hill, by a gracious gesture of the diocese of London, has been leased to the Serbian Orthodox for twenty-one years.

The ceremonies began with the singing of Vespers on Saturday evening. Bishop Nikolai with a great number of Serbian and other Orthodox archimandrites, archpriests and clergy presided over the religious services, and later during Vespers, King Peter of Yugoslavia, took his place on his throne in choir. The Bishop of London was represented by the Bishop of Kensington, and the vicar of the parish was also present, as well as the assistant secretary of the Council for Foreign Relations and the General Secretary of the Association.

The main ceremonies took place on Sunday, June 29th, when, during a solemn offering of the Holy Liturgy, the building and in particular the Holy Table was consecrated to divine use and in honour of St. Sava. In this Bishop Nikolai took the chief part, Bishop Buxton (late of Gibraltar) representing the Bishop of London, and the Archbishop of Canterbury also sending an episcopal representative. The acclamation of King Peter by the crowded congregation was a very moving climax to the ceremonies. Those who knew even a little of the personal tragedies that lie behind the broken lives of the men who made up the majority of the great congregation were able to realize something of the spiritual quality of this act of worship.

In the afternoon of the same day the Festival Hall was filled with Serbians who came together to sing their national songs, hear speeches, and above all greet their former Ruler. It was a great day for them and a triumphant witness to the spirit and influence of the Orthodox Serbian Church.

MOUNT ATHOS IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH [1]

IT is, certainly, not an easy task to prepare a paper on Mount Athos. The difficulty does not come only from the fact that so much has been already written about the Holy Mountain. There exists quite a large literature on Mount Athos in many languages and of varied type; descriptions by travellers and visitors to Mount Athos in the first place.[2] The most ancient of such travellers' descriptions is by the Russian deacon Zosima of Novgorod, who visited Mount Athos in 1420 and left us a short narrative of his journey. The next belongs to the Italian Buondelmonti, who visited Athos in the middle of the fifteenth century. Since then and until our own time such descriptions have continually been published. Other books on the history, archæology, art, legal structure [3] and monastic life on Mount Athos can be added to this fundamental bulk of impressions by travellers. This literary production, certainly, shows an uninterrupted and vivid interest in the monastic land of Athos during the course of the last cen-

[1] Paper read at the meeting of the Oxford Branch of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius on January 31st, 1952.

[2] Comparatively good bibliography on Mount Athos may be found in the article "Athos" by the French uniat C. Korolevskij in *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques*, 5 (1931), col. 54–124. The bibliography itself there occupies col. 120–124. See further our remarks on this article.

[3] The most detailed study of the legal structure of the Holy Mountain is to be found in the book of D. Petrakakos, *The Monastic State of the Holy Mountain*, Athens, 1925 (in Greek). It is slightly biassed in favour of the great ("sovereign") monasteries. The

turies until our own day on the part of the eastern and western world equally. But it does not give an adequate, exact or complete picture of Mount Athos and of its spiritual life in particular, so that the holy mountain still remains in the eyes of many a mystery and a problem. Diametrically opposite opinions have been expressed about it. Such a diversity in evaluation could be explained largely by the fact that most of them were based on short visits by persons ignorant not only of the language of the country, but of nearly everything concerning the Orthodox Church, eastern monasticism and spirituality. However, even serious and learned studies on Mount Athos, as, for instance, the long article of Korolevskij in the *Dictionnaire de l'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques* [4] are full of enormous mistakes and inexactitudes,[5] which would never be tolerated in an historical work on any other subject except Athos, where everybody believes he has the right to say whatever he likes. As an example of a serious and objective book, happily combining travellers' impressions with an historical survey, may be mentioned the excellent work of Professor Dawkins, *The Monks of Athos*.[6] Still, even this book is not exempt from inexactitudes and does not enter deeply into the spiritual life.

In the present paper I shall say only some words on the place of Mount Athos in the spiritual life of the Orthodox Church in the past and at present. I suppose that all know the general outline of the history of Mount Athos, so that it is not necessary to speak much about that. Athos, as monastic land, seems to date from the seventh–eighth centuries. Its rise can be linked with the Moslem conquest of Egypt, Palestine and Syria and with the spread of the Monophysite heresy in these countries. After the loss of the East the centre of Orthodox monasticism was transferred to Mount Athos, although this process took a comparatively long time to achieve.

opposite tendency (in favour of the small monasteries, "cells"), is to be found in the book of Chr. Ktenas, *The Monastic Institutions of the Holy Mountain*, Athens, 1929 (in Greek).

[4] See note 2.

[5] For instance, Korolevskij asserts that the existing Statute of Mount Athos (1926, text in Petrakakos and also in a separate edition) permits the free change of a cœnobitic monastery into an idiorhythmic one and vice versa (col. 99). In reality, only the change of an idiorhythmic into a cœnobitic one is permitted, while the conversion of a cœnobitic into an idiorhythmic one is absolutely prohibited. It is also not true that the idiorhythmic monasteries avoid the practice of the *rasoenche*, a kind of semi-profession without proper monastic vows (col. 104). On the contrary, the idiorhythmic monasteries are full of such persons, the *rasoforoi*, who remain in this state—half monks, half laymen—all their lives. In Greek cœnobitic monasteries the *rasoenche* does not exist at all. They know only one profession, the "Great Schema," and among the Russians it is only a temporary, transitory stage. The ideas of Korolevskij on the central monastic administration of Mount Athos are even more fantastic. He completely ignores the *Hiera Koinotes* ("Sacred Community") and instead of it repeatedly speaks of an imaginary "*Great* Epistasia" (col. 90) as of the Supreme Administrative Institution of Athos. In reality, there exists the "*Sacred* Epistasia," but it is a mere executive organ of the *Koinotes*, deprived of any initiative or influence. The supreme administrative institution of Athos is the *H. Koinotes* (Assembly of the representatives of the twenty monasteries) together with the Bi-annual Assembly (legislative and judicial institution) and, even more, the Sacred Double Assembly, where each monastery is represented by two monks. It is worth while to note that the Statute of 1926 makes no mention of the Double Assembly and for this reason some Governors of Athos (appointed from Athens by the Greek Foreign Office) tried, in their ignorance of the traditions of the Holy Mountain, to deny its legality. But in vain! The Double Assembly continues to be the most influential institution of Athos.

[6] R. Dawkins, *The Monks of Athos*, London, 1936. Critique of this book: B. Krivocheine, *Les Légendes de l'Athos*, Byzantion, 14 (1939), pp. 662–666.

Thus, we see in the ninth century the first elements of organized monastic life on Athos in the form of small settlements with a central administration. The first great monastery, the Lavra of St. Athanasius, was founded in 963. From 972 dates the first general statute of the holy mountain, the so-called "Tragos" (because it was written on a parchment made from goat's leather), signed by St. Athanasius and the Emperor John Tzimisces.[7] In eleventh–twelfth centuries Mount Athos was completely organized with numerous monasteries of various types, a central administration and monks of different nationalities, Greeks in the first place, then Georgians, Bulgarians, Russians, Serbians. Even the Latins possessed there the monastery of Santa Maria d'Amalfi. It followed the Latin rite, but was under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople, even after the split of the Western from the Eastern Church. This period, which extends chronologically to the Latin invasions of the east, the so-called Fourth Crusade, the conquest of Constantinople by the Latins (1204) and the foundation of a Latin kingdom in Salonica, can be considered as one of the most flourishing epochs in the history of Athonite monasticism. More than 200 monasteries were spread over the whole space of the Athos peninsula. The monastic population seems to have then been greater than in any other period. Some historians even speak of 50,000 monks then living on Athos, but this number is greatly exaggerated. However, a population of ten or even fifteen thousand probably existed. Spiritually, this period is dominated by the great figure of St. Athanasius of Trebizond (about † 1000). A wise organizer of cœnobitic life, a remarkable spiritual director, he was a very broadminded personality. St. Athanasius succeeded in attracting to Mount Athos by his holiness and his wisdom monks from all parts of the Christian world. He had especially close relations with the Georgians (explained, perhaps, by the fact that his mother was a Georgian) and with the Latins. It was owing to his support that the monastery of the Iberians (Georgians) and the Latin monastery were founded on Mount Athos. This Iberian monastery soon became an important centre of Georgian culture, where many books were translated into Georgian. The statutes of Lavra, elaborated by St. Athanasius, bear traces of the rule of St. Benedict,[8] probably owing to the influence of the neighbouring Latin monastery. Such a supernational, ecumenical idea of Mount Athos, as the centre of Orthodox monasticism, above national distinctions, may be considered to be the legacy of St. Athanasius to all future generations of the monks of Athos.

However, during this period (tenth–twelfth centuries) Mount Athos did not play a particularly important role in the history of eastern spirituality. No doubt, the average spiritual level of the monasteries was sufficiently high, but only a few spiritual writings belong to the monks of Athos of this period. Apart from the beautiful and highly historical *Life* of St. Athanasius[9] and some monastic statutes of, rather, juridical character,

[7] Text in Ph. Meyer, *Die Haupturkunden für die Geschichte der Athosklöster*, Leipzig, 1894, pp. 141–151. The genuineness successfully demonstrated by F. Dölger, *Die Echtheit des "Tragos," Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 41 (1941), pp. 340–350.

[8] See H. G. Beck, *Die Benediktiner Regel auf dem Athos—Byz. Zeitschrift*, 44 (1951), pp. 21–24.

[9] The most ancient version of this "Life" was edited by M. Pomialovsky, St. Petersburg, 1895.

the only important spiritual work is the *Life* of the hermit St. Peter of Athos,[10] which is almost void of historical elements, but is remarkable as an early exposition of hesychastic spirituality and for its particular veneration of St. Mary the Virgin, protector of the Holy Mountain. Later, in the fourteenth century, St. Gregory Palamas made use of this *Life*, arranged by him in literary form, as an apologia of the hesychastic ideal.[11] Mount Athos was dominated during this period by the cœnobitic life, by the great monasteries, and it is, perhaps, one of the reasons for its unproductivity in the field of spirituality or rather spiritual writing. Already St. John Climacos had noticed a similar phenomenon among Pachomian monks. In any case, the great spiritual authors of this epoch do not belong to Athos. For instance, the great mystic and outstanding writer, St. Symeon the New Theologian († 1022),[12] a younger contemporary of St. Athanasius, and his disciple Nicetas Stethatus, who both lived in Constantinople, Elias Ecdicus, Philotheus Sinaita, etc., Mount Sinai, in spite of its isolation in the east, and Constantinople are still in tenth–twelfth centuries the centres of mysticism, but Athos was preparing to receive their legacy and to develop further their spiritual doctrines.

This happened in thirteenth–fifteenth centuries. From a spiritual point of view it is the best period of Athos. Externally, however, this time was filled with catastrophes and disasters. There were incursions and ravages of Latin crusaders during the whole of the thirteenth century. They even built a special fortress on the boundaries of Athos (the so-called Francocastro or the Castle of the Franks), the easier to plunder the Holy Mountain. Even more terrible were the devastations by Catalonian mercenaries, who set fire to it in the beginning of fourteenth century, and burned whole monasteries together with their monks. Ravages by the Turks at the end of the same century followed them, and persecutions on the part of the "unionist" Emperor Michael VIII, who tried to impose by force the union with Rome. All these calamities, which passed over Mount Athos, had the result of fortifying and developing this anti-Roman attitude, which has since been a characteristic feature of its monks. Spiritually, Mount Athos became in the midst of these persecutions the centre of one of the greatest mystical movements in the history of the Orthodox Church, known by the name of "Hesychasm." This name comes from the word ἡσυχία, which means literally, "quiet." It is a term designing a state of mystical quiet, when the man gets rid of his passions and distractions of thought and is all impregnated by the grace of the Holy Ghost. It must not be confounded with western quietism. There is nothing particularly new in this spirituality, except the intensity of this fourteenth century movement and its great expansion, both among monks and laymen. Essentially, it was the

[10] Greek text in Kirsopp Lake, *The Early Days of Monasticism on Mount Athos*, Oxford, 1909, pp. 18–39.

[11] Migne P.G. 150, 996–1040.

[12] The most recent book on him: Hermenegild M. Biedermann, *Das Menschenbild bei Symeon dem Jüngeren dem Theologen*, Würzburg, 1949. As all the precedent works on Symeon, it is not based on the Greek prototype of his sermons, which is until now unpublished. We hope to edit soon (in collaboration with Prof. J. Hussey) this Greek text.

ancient contemplative and mystical tradition of eastern monasticism, already represented in the fourth–fifth centuries by Evagrius and Macarius. This ancient doctrine of contemplative life aiming at the vision of God was strongly influenced from the fifth century and later by the theory and practice of the so-called "Jesus Prayer," which is a kind of mental prayer centred on the Name of Jesus. Mount Athos did not create this prayer. Its most ancient centres seem to have been Palestine, Egypt and especially Mount Sinai, from whence it spread over all the Orthodox world, penetrating even lay circles. It reached Mount Athos in its developed and rather definitive shape with its traditional text formulated as follows: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." [13] It is generally believed that the participation of Athos in the development of this prayer consisted in the elaboration of its psychotechnical side. We mean by this the conjunction of the unceasing prayer with the rhythm of breathing, the concentration of the attention on the heart, which is considered as the centre of spiritual activity, and a certain position of the body during the prayer (as, for instance, sitting on a low seat with head inclined down so that the chin touches the breast). We cannot however agree that all this psychotechnic, which is so important in eastern spirituality, was "invented" by the monks of Athos.[14] It is rather a product of long ascetical experience, which taught the monks the efficacy of these means for the concentration of attention on the object of prayer and the prevention of its disturbance by thoughts and imagination. This practice is of more ancient origin and is not confined to Athos. We find already in the Spiritual Homilies, attributed to St. Macarius (fourth–fifth centuries) the doctrine on the central place of the heart in spiritual life and in St. John Climacos (seventh century), Hesychius Sinaite (eight century), etc., there are many indications of the role of the breathing in prayer, as well as on other somatic practices. The earliest ascetical document describing in detail the "technical" or "scientific" prayer, the "Sermon on prayer and attention," ascribed to St. Symeon the New Theologian, apparently does not belong to Athos.[15] Although its genuineness is uncertain, chronologically it dates from the tenth–eleventh centuries, and geographically it seems to belong to Constantinople. On Mount Athos we meet for the first time this form of Jesus Prayer in the writings of St. Nicephorus the Monk, who lived there in the second half of the thirteenth century. In his treatise "On sobriety and care of the heart," [16] Nicephorus gives a very circumstantial description of the function of the heart in praying and on the role of breathing. It is worth while to notice that St. Nicephorus was a man of western origin, probably an Italian, converted to Orthodoxy. He proved his attachment to the Ortho-

[13] On the history of the Jesus Prayer see *Un moine de l'Eglise d'Orient. La Prière de Jésus. Sa genèse et son développement dans la tradition byzantinoslave.* Irénikon 20 (1947), pp. 249–273 and 381–421. Also my paper at the Conference of Patristic Studies, "The Date of the Traditional Text of the Jesus Prayer." Published (in French) in *Messager de l'Exarchat du Patriarche Russe en Europe Occidentale.* Paris, 1951, notes 7–8, pp. 55–59.

[14] Such is the opinion of J. Hausherr, S.J., in his article, "Note sur l'inventeur de la méthode d'oraison hésychaste." *Orientalia Christiana,* 20 (1930), pp. 179–182. The author of *La Prière de Jésus* seems to have similar ideas (o.c., p. 272).

[15] Greek prototype edited by J. Hausherr. *Orient. Christiana* 9 (1927).

[16] P.G. 147, 945–966.

dox Church during the persecutions under the "unionist" Emperor Michael Palæologus and is venerated on Athos as a confessor. His Latin origin may, perhaps, explain his particular interest in physiological questions and the large use of physiological descriptions (of the heart, for instance) in his writings. His activity, however, does not seem to have had much influence on the monks of Athos. It is the 14th century St. Gregory Sinaite († 1346), who must be considered as the main initiator of the great mystical revival on Mount Athos. On his arrival on Athos, after a long sojourn in various monasteries of the east, Gregory found on the Holy Mountain—as he says himself—many virtuous and pious men, but only a few genuine contemplatives, possessing mental prayer in its higher degrees. But even these had acquired the prayer only by practice and were ignorant of its theory and were unable to teach it to others. St. Gregory himself learned the Jesus Prayer on Mount Sinai and even more in Cyprus from a certain holy "elder," Arsenius. It must be noted that this prayer was always transmitted by personal initiation. St. Gregory Sinaite succeeded in creating on Mount Athos a strong current of mystical life by his personal guidance and teaching and by his writings. It was a contemplative school based mainly on the practice of the Jesus Prayer in its most elaborated and technical form. From this moment and for a long time afterwards Mount Athos became the spiritual and even the theological centre of the Orthodox Church, with enormous influence on the whole Orthodox world. St. Gregory undertook numerous missionary journeys across the Orthodox world in order to propagate his ideas on contemplative life and unceasing prayer. He was effectively helped in his work of spiritual regeneration by a great saint of Mount Athos, Maximus Capsocalyvis. We possess four "Lives" of this saint, published some years ago in *Analecta Bollandiana*.[17] St. Maximus in distinction to St. Gregory was a simple man, without education. He has not left any written works, but he was more than any other gifted with the grace of the Holy Spirit, a charismatic, a seer and a wonder-worker. This simple man, however, was deeply versed in the most subtle questions of spirituality. He took a vivid interest in the theological discussions of his time from a quite definite personal attitude. However, it was not from books that he had acquired the grace of unceasing prayer. It was granted to him as a special gift of the Blessed Virgin Mary. With St. Maximus Capsocalyvis there reappears on Mount Athos an ancient mystical theme of eastern spirituality, the vision of the Divine Light, which had such a central place in the mystical experience and doctrine of Macarius and of St. Symeon the New Theologian. The "Lives" of St. Maximus contain many descriptions of this vision, an "invisible vision," as he himself says, supra-sensible and not material, but still quite objective and real, so that one of the disciples of the saint (Mark the Simple) could even once see him surrounded by a cloud of fire while praying. Sometimes this vision of light was accompanied by a feeling of supersensual fragrance. The teaching of St. Maximus on ecstatic states of spiritual life, when every prayer ceases, is also very important. Here,

[17] By Metropolitan Eulogios Kourilas and Er. Halkin in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 54 (1936), pp. 42–109.

St. Maximus comes in close touch with the great Syrian mystic of the eighth century, Mar Isaac of Nineveh.[18]

With St. Gregory Palamas the hesychastic movement enters the period of dogmatic discussions and theological construction.[19] St. Gregory Palamas, who died as Archbishop of Salonica († 1359), was all his life closely linked with Mount Athos. He became a monk there at the age of 21 after leaving Constantinople, where he was born of a noble family and received a brilliant education. He lived for a long time on Athos, was for three years abbot of the cœnobitic monastery Esphigmenou, but resigned for the love of "hesychia" (spiritual quiet) and dwelt as a hermit in the environs of the Lavra of St. Athanasius. He would probably have remained there to the end of his days if only the Calabrian monk Varlaam (Barlaam in western pronunciation), who was a kind of adventurer and superficial Renaissance scholar and quite devoid of any spiritual life, had not conceived after a short sojourn on Athos the idea of attacking violently the contemplative monks of the Holy Mountain for their practice of unceasing Jesus Prayer. He ridiculed their psychotechnical methods and called them ironically ὀμφαλόψυχοι. By this nickname he insinuated that the monks believed that the soul of the man has its seat in the navel! Such an assertion was wrong. Varlaam came to arbitrary conclusions from badly understood ascetic doctrines. He based them upon the opinions of ignorant persons. St. Gregory Palamas left his solitude and assumed the defence of the hesychast spiritual doctrine. The polemics very soon left the ascetical ground and concentrated themselves on theological and metaphysical questions, such as the uncreated Divine Light, the nature of grace, the "Essence" (οὐσία) of God in relation to His "Energies," etc. Some modern scholars have reproached Palamas for having left the contemplative life for dogmatic polemics.[20] Such a reproach is not just. Apart from the fact that Palamas entered dogmatic polemics not by his own initiative, but under urgent pressure of the monastic authorities of Athos, acting thus he only followed the traditional way of the ancient ascetic Fathers, who were never indifferent to dogmatic questions, so closely connected with the spiritual life. Similar reproaches could be made to St. Maximus the Confessor for his interference in anti-monothelete polemics or to St. Theodore the Studite for his defence of the worship of the holy ikons. The great ascetic saints were never indifferent to Orthodoxy, especially when they believed that heretical doctrines undermine the foundations of spiritual life. And this was particularly true in the present case. Mystical experience and all the ascetic efforts of mankind are deprived of their sense and lose their value, if the Light, which illuminates the contemplative in

[18] English translation of his works: *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*. Translated from . . . Syriac Text . . . by A. J. Wensinck. Verhandelingen der K. Akademies . . . Amsterdam. Nieuwe Reeks. Deel XXIII. Amsterdam, 1923.

[19] Recent works on Palamas: M. Jugie, Palamas in *Dict. de Théologie Cath.*, 12 (1932), col. 1735–1776. Also his article: Palamite (Controverse), ibidem, cols. 1777–1818; B. Krivocheine, "The Ascetic and Theological Teaching of St. Gregory Palamas" (English translation in *E.C.Q.*, Vol. III (1938–1939), pp. 26ff., etc.); V. Lossky, *La Théologie de la Lumière chez St. Grégoire de Thessalonique*—Dieu Vivant, 1 (1945), pp. 95–118; Arch. Cyprian Kern, *The Anthropology of St. Gregory Palamas*. Paris, 1950 (in Russian).

[20] See the article, "La Prière de Jésus," p. 388.

his union with God, is not really Divine and uncreated. A contemplative life can only be justified, if we attain through it a direct contact with the Divine; if the Light, which is seen by the mystic, is identical in its nature with the Light of Transfiguration, which overshadowed our Lord on Mount Tabor. All the adversaries of Palamas—Varlaam, Acindynus, Nicephorus Gregoras and others—denied these essential foundations of genuine mystical experience. Acting thus they came in contradiction with the ancient patristic tradition of the Eastern Church, expressed in the writings of St. Gregory of Nazianzus and St. John Damascene, who taught that the Light of Transfiguration was the Glory of God, a manifestation of the Divinity,[21] eternal, infinite, uncreated, as St. John Damascene expressively affirms in his homily on the Transfiguration.[22] We have no intention to attempt to expound here the controversy on the "Essence" and "Energies" of God, which soon took the central place in these discussions. It belongs more to the theological and even metaphysical regions than to the field of spirituality. It was, however, closely connected with it. The distinction between the inaccessible and incomprehensible Essence and the uncreated Energies of the Godhead, in which mankind can participate, is traditional in eastern patristics (the Cappadocians, St. John Damascene and others) and was only further developed and more sharply formulated by Palamas. This permitted him theologically to ground and to maintain the reality of the union with God and of the "divinization" by grace without falling in any kind of pantheistic confusion of the created with the Creator. At the same time the apophatic doctrine of the incomprehensibility of the Divine Essence justified the mystical way of approach to God against the more intellectual methods of some Byzantine circles influenced by western scholastics.

In these theological struggles Palamas did not stand alone. He was actively supported by all Mount Athos. At this point we may remember the famous Ἁγιορειτικὸς Τόμος, a kind of manifesto of the hesychast movement, containing an exposition of its principal theological items, composed at the beginning of the controversy by the Athonite monk Philotheus Coccinus, future Patriarch of Constantinople.[23] It was signed by the abbots of the Holy Mountain at a general assembly in its capital, Karyai. It is easy to understand the importance of Mount Athos in the general ecclesiastical affairs of this period from the great number of ecumenical patriarchs, who were former monks of the Holy Mountain. To mention only some of those, who left a great impress on the history of spirituality: Callistus I, author of the "Life" of St. Gregory Sinaite[24] and of other spiritual works, unpublished until now. The already mentioned Philotheus Coccinus, a converted Jew, the biographer of St. Gregory Palamas and of other contemporary saints, a very remarkable theologian.[25] Callistus II, a

[21] Oration 40 on the Holy Baptism. P.G. 36, 365A.
[22] P.G. 96, 565A.
[23] P.G. 150, 1225–1236.
[24] Edited by M. Pomialovsky. St. Petersburg, 1894.
[25] See the interesting article on him by V. Laurent in *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, 12 (1934), cols. 1408–1509. His *Life of St. Germanus Agiorites* was recently edited by P. Joannon, *Analect. Bolland.*, 70 (1952), pp. 50–114.

deep, mystical author. He composed, probably, in the late fourteenth century, together with Ignatius Xanthopoulos an outstanding manual of hesychastic spirituality.[26] This work has not lost its importance and vitality even in our day. We have now an English translation in a recently published edition entitled *Writings from the Philokalia*. (Regretfully, I must remark that it was not made from the Greek prototype and has many defects.) It is also interesting as testifying that the spiritual leadership on Mount Athos during this period passed from the great cœnobitic monasteries to the smaller monastic settlements called *sketes*, of half-anchorite type, and with stronger contemplative aims. We can also number among the Athonite authors the ex-Emperor John Cantacuzenus. After his resignation he became a monk in the monastery Vatopedion of Athos with the name Joasaph. Apart from his remarkable history of the "hesychastic" period, he also left some theological treatises of a value difficult to expect in the writings of an ex-Emperor, even a Byzantine. Regretfully, it must be said, that these works are also to a great extent unpublished.

This fourteenth century period is, certainly, the most interesting and outstanding time in the spiritual history of Athos. Unfortunately, it did not last long. During the first centuries of Turkish domination Mount Athos was not spiritually very active. Holiness, however, continued to flourish there, and we have many saints in this period, St. Nilus (seventeenth century), St. Hierotheus (seventeenth century), St. Acacius (eighteenth century), etc. But we do not know much about them, as they have not had the privilege to find such excellent biographers as their predecessors of the hesychastic period. A new type of saints is also closely connected with Athos, the "New Martyrs." They were Christians martyred by the Turks for the confession of their faith. An important number of them were monks of Athos, while others were inspired to martyrdom by the monks. The monks of Athos taught that a Christian, who once denied his faith and became a Muslim (which frequently happened in those times of oppression), should not be satisfied with a private repentance of his apostasy, but had the duty publicly to reject Islam and confess his Christian faith openly before the Turks. Such a rejection of Islam by a Muslim was severely punished by Turkish laws. Persons who did it were put atrociously to death. This doctrine of Mount Athos produced many martyrs. It was sometimes criticized as asking too much from human nature. Many, however, have put it in practice. It was an expression of the attachment of the monks of Athos to their faith and of the seriousness with which they treated questions concerning salvation.

A new remarkable period began for Athos in the second half of the eighteenth century. It lasted until the Greek Insurrection (1821) and, perhaps, even later. The Holy Mountain once again took a leading place in the spiritual life of the Orthodox world. I do not mean by this the foundation of a theological academy on Mount Athos. It functioned there for some years under the direction of the well known Greek eighteenth-century scholar, Eugenios Vulgaris († 1816), a very meritorious man with encyclo-

[26] P.G. 147, 636-812. See also: A. M. Amann, *Die Gotteschau im palamitischen Hesychasmus* in *Das östliche Christentum*. N.F. 3/4, 2 Aufl. Würzburg, 1948.

pædic knowledge, though rather eclectic and, perhaps, superficial.[27] He united an attachment to Orthodox dogmas and even customs of the Church with an inclination towards the ideas of the German philosophers of the "Aufklärung" period. It is easy to understand that this teaching, impregnated by the philosophy of Wolf and sufficiently remote from patristic tradition, found strong opposition among Athonite monks, unlearned, perhaps, but standing closer to the source. Vulgaris was obliged to leave Athos and went to Russia, where he was consecrated bishop. He found a more congenial *milieu* in the Russia of Catherine II than on monastic Athos. His Academy did not continue to function for long, but was replaced by a more elementary school. Greater importance must be paid to a remarkable spiritual movement for the revival of genuine monastic traditions and for the return to a more profound conception of spirituality, which took place on Athos during this same period. It was connected with the names of three outstanding Greek personalities, Macarius (a former Bishop of Corinth), Nikodemos Agiorites and Athanasios Parios.[28] Macarius is a saint of the Orthodox Church. I have read with great satisfaction recently that the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople is at present examining the proposal to acknowledge Nikodemos Agiorites also as a saint. I hope that this will soon occur for Nikodemos indeed deserves it. He strove together with Macarius for the restoration of the ancient spiritual contemplative tradition, which had been largely forgotten on Athos in the course of time. They considered that the principal way to attain a new high spiritual level was by the study of ascetical and mystical fathers, the practice of the Jesus Prayer and more frequent communion. The monastic and, generally, the religious life of their contemporaries fell far short of their aim and they had to wage a great struggle for the defence and propagation of their ideas. Frequent communion especially found many adversaries, even on Athos, and a great and violent controversy began. As it often happens, however, the principal discussion dealt not so much with the most important positions, as, for instance, the Jesus Prayer or frequent communion, but concentrated itself on a rather secondary item: namely, whether it is permitted to commemorate the dead on Sunday, the day of the Resurrection? As a rule the Orthodox Church commemorates the dead on Saturdays, which is the day of rest, consecrated to the dead. However, monks of one of the *sketes* (hermitages), occupied during the week with the construction of a church, transferred the commemoration service to Sunday. Their action provoked the criticism of some fanatical groups. Nikodemos and Macarius took the defence of the monks, who commemorated the dead on Sunday. They argued that for Christians there is no incompatibility between death and resurrection. Death is for them no longer a mournful event and can therefore be commemorated on the day of joy. They were soon nicknamed by

[27] See on him: "The Introducers of Natural Sciences in Greece" by D.K. in *Aklines*, 6 (1943), Athens, pp. 92–98 (in Greek).

[28] A most interesting article on this period: "The Re-educative Movement of the Colyvades and the two Alexanders of Skiathos" by J. Veritis in *Aktines*, 6 (1943), pp. 99–110 (in Greek).

their opponents *colyvades* (from *colyva*, a sort of cake brought to church and blessed in memory of the dead). This ironical name, given to the partisans of a higher spiritual life, reminds us of the nickname *omphalopsychoi*, given by Varlaam to the hesychasts of the fourteenth century. On the question of frequent communion, Macarius of Corinth published in Venice in 1777 a pamphlet, followed by other writings of Nikodemos and Athanasios Parios. All were in favour of more frequent communion than was generally in use among monks and laymen at that time. Other persons, however (as for instance Neophytos Kapsokalyvites, also a monk of Athos), answered in a contrary sense. The Ecumenical Patriarchate took a rather undecided attitude in this controversy. At first it approved the book of Macarius, but later it condemned it, then in the end it recalled its condemnation and left the question open. The great Patriarch St. Gregory V (hanged by the Turks in 1821) was a warm partisan of frequent communion and always supported this movement. He was closely connected with Mount Athos, where he lived for many years in exile. He worked much for the re-establishment in the great monasteries of Athos of the cœnobitic order. During the Turkish domination it had been largely replaced by a curious system called "idiorhythmic." The basic monastic vows of poverty and obedience were sensibly relaxed under this uncanonical system, which authorized monks to possess private property. It contributed largely to the spiritual decay of Mount Athos. Until our own day it constitutes one of the weakest features of the Holy Mountain.

Much was also done for the restoration of the ancient ascetic tradition of contemplative life. Nikodemos was a very voluminous spiritual writer. Some of his works, such as the *Invisible Fight*, show the influence of western spirituality and lack originality, but others are of greater value. For instance, the *Spiritual Manual* is quite a remarkable book, interesting as an attempt at the further development of hesychastic ascetical practice. The most important literary production of this period is, certainly, the *Philokalia*, a celebrated ascetical and mystical symposium, published in Venice in 1782 by Nikodemos Agiorites and Macarius of Corinth. This spiritual selection made accessible to broad circles of Orthodox people, both monastic and lay, the best writings of the ancient fathers, on mental prayer especially. Until that time they had been buried in manuscripts in the libraries of Mount Athos. This book was very soon translated in Slavonic and Rumanian. It drastically stimulated a revival of spiritual life and furthered a return to genuine ascetic tradition in all Orthodox countries. This is especially true for Russia. This book, in many editions, had a wide circulation until the Revolution. The Slavonic translation was made by Païssy Velichkovsky, a well known spiritual personality of the eighteenth century. Russian by origin, he died in Rumania, where he passed the last part of his life as abbot in various monasteries. I have heard that the Rumanian Church is also favourably considering the question of his acknowledgment as among the saints. The life of Païssy Velichkovsky well illustrates the pan-Orthodox importance of Athos for the spiritual life of this period. Païssy began as a monk in Russia. Profoundly dissatisfied with the spiritual conditions in Russian monasteries, he left for Athos in

search of a higher spiritual life. At first he was also disappointed with what he found there. It was before the spiritual movement of the *colyvades* had produced its fruits. Later, however, he knew personally St. Macarius of Corinth and other holy personalities. He was deeply impressed by their life and by their work of collecting the writings of the mystical fathers for the edition of the *Philokalia*. And as soon as the book was published he translated it into Slavonic. Many studies have been written on the Russian spiritual directors, the *startsi* of the nineteenth century, especially those of the monastery of Optina. We must not lose sight, however, of the fact that their source is in Athos, and the *colyvades* of the late eighteenth century, with St. Macarius of Corinth. It is true that the Russian *startsi* acquired more influence on Russian life of the nineteenth century than the Greek *gerondes* did in their own country. They had also more relations with the intellectual world. We can cite, for instance, such persons as Dostoevsky, Gogol, Kireevsky, who have been deeply influenced by the *startsi* of Optina. However, something similar also existed in Greece. Two outstanding modern Greek authors, Alexandros Papadiamandis († 1908) and Alexandros Moraïtidis († 1930) were much impressed, both in their life and writings, by the monks of Athos.[29] Moraïtidis especially was a profoundly religious man. His spiritual father was a monk of Athos called Dionysios. Moraïtidis in his old age himself became a monk in the monastery of his birthplace, the little island Skiathos, not far from Mount Athos. Of Russian writers Constantine Leontiev, an original philosopher and essayist of great talent, had certainly the closest connections with Mount Athos. Rather pagan in the first part of his life, he became a fervent, albeit peculiar, Orthodox after his visits to the Holy Mountain in the 'sixties of the last century. He died as a novice of the Lavra of St. Sergy near Moscow.[30]

What is the present spiritual state of Mount Athos? What part has the Holy Mountain at present in the spiritual life of the Orthodox Church? I cannot pretend to give a satisfactory answer to these questions. So many after a few days' visit have already tried to solve them in their writings. When one has had a personal and long experience of something it is often more difficult to express definite conclusions, still less prophecies. I will only make a few remarks. Mount Athos is at present passing through an acute and dangerous crisis with an uncertain issue. For this crisis there are many reasons, both external and internal. Isolated as it is, the Holy Mountain is still a part of the world, and what is happening outside has its repercussion on it. The most striking expression of the critical state of Mount Athos is, certainly, the rapid decrease in its monastic population. At the beginning of our century, before the First World War, Mount Athos had nearly 10,000 monks. It has now less than 2,000. In itself this number of 2,000 monks is not so low. In the past Athos has often had such a population. Thus, in sixteenth–seventeenth centuries the number of the monks was approximately the same as in our days. Only in its first period (eleventh–

[29] See the article of Veritis in precedent note.
[30] See on him the book of N. Berdiaev, *Constantine Leontiev*, Paris (in Russian).

twelfth centuries), as in the second half of the eighteenth century, until the Greek Insurrection of 1821 and in the beginning of the twentieth century, the population of the Holy Mountain has reached *circa* 10,000 monks or even more. However, the rapidity of the decrease of the number of the monks in the last 40 years is alarming. Some of the reasons for this phenomenon are rather external or even political. Athos has been cut off by recent historical events from the greater part of the Orthodox world. It has been cut off from Russia since the First World War and from all the Balkan Orthodox countries, except Greece, since the Second World War. As a result Athos has become less accessible for the people of those countries than it had been generally in the past. The policy of the Greek Government towards national minorities has quickened even more this process of the isolation of the holy mountain. Great difficulties have been created for persons of non-Greek origin desiring to become monks in the monasteries of Athos. It must, regretfully, be recorded that these measures have damaged not only the Slavonic or Rumanian converts, but the Holy Mountain as a whole. Mount Athos never was and can never become an appanage of only one nation. It has always been a pan-Orthodox centre of monasticsm, where all Orthodox nations are represented. We may remember here the important role played on Athos by the Georgians in the ancient period, by Serbians and their historic monastery Hilendar in the thirteenth-sixteenth centuries, and by the Russians in the nineteenth century.[31] Each of these nations has made a large spiritual and cultural contribution (I say nothing of the material) to the prosperity of Athos, without depriving it of its prevailing Greek character. Confined to one nation, Athos would lose its sense of existence as the very heart of Orthodoxy. Before long it would decay. And in fact this same process of depopulation is also taking place in the Greek monasteries although at a slower rate. In our days there are not sufficient persons entering the monasteries of Athos, and of those who do so, only a part remain. The others go back into the world or, in the best case, to ecclesiastical occupations outside the Holy Mountain. What are the reasons for this sad situation which did not exist in the past? First to be mentioned is the general weakening of religious life in our days and the greater inclination among the faithful to more active missionary work than to the contemplative life. The ascetical austerities of Athos monastic rule are difficult to adopt, especially by contemporary men, spoilt by modern comfort. It is equally difficult to break with modern material civilization and to adapt oneself to a world devoid of it. There is a deficiency of spiritual guidance and an inadequate education of novices in some monasteries. The deviations from canonical law and genuine tradition, which exist in the legal organization of Athos, are the cause of serious injustice, which reacts detrimentally on monastic life (for instance, in relations between the various classes of monks in "idiorhythmic" monasteries, as also in relations between the "sovereign" monasteries and their dependencies, the "cells"). The lack of theological instruction on Athos

[31] On the Russians on Athos see: A. Soloviev, *Histoire du Monastère Russe au Mont Athos*—Byzantion, 8 (1933), pp. 213-238.

and the difficulties which scholars encounter when they would like to give themselves up to theological studies in order to continue them in the monasteries, all these and other reasons have resulted in the reduction of the monastic population of Athos mainly to aged persons over 50 and even 60. It is now rare to find anyone who is under 30. In the non-Greek monasteries there are none at all. Such a numerical predominance of aged persons creates enormous difficulties for the monasteries in carrying on their ecclesiastical services and in all monastic work in general. Even more grave are the unfavourable spiritual consequences of such a situation. There is always something decadent, inert and slack in a monastery, which lacks young monks. Nearly the same can be said of the shortage of educated persons. Orthodox monasticism, certainly, never considered study or scholarship as an aim or the essential part or justification of monastic life. It has always been open to persons of any condition or level of instruction. No distinctions were ever made between the educated and the uneducated among the brethren. And in acting thus the eastern monks stood more near to the genuine spirit of ancient monasticism than some monastic orders in the west which introduced distinctions between "fathers" and "lay-brothers," based mainly on a difference of educational level. However, when a monastic community is composed almost exclusively of unlearned persons and is dominated by them, such a state of things cannot be favourable for spiritual life. It may even have dangerous consequences for the maintenance of the genuine traditions of monasticism. How different were the conditions in the past when Mount Athos reckoned so many highly cultured persons among the monks!

And yet Mount Athos continues to hold a place that is quite unique, precious and of irreplacable importance in the spiritual life of the Orthodox Church. It is the only place where the ancient monastic tradition of the east in all its variety still constitutes even until our time a living human reality. There it dominates all life and gives to this country its own particular colour. It is one of the very few places where the Byzantine liturgy through the whole ecclesiastical year is still celebrated in all its richness and beauty. In parish churches and even in monasteries outside Athos we can generally see only fragments of the complete Orthodox ecclesiastical services. It is one of the few places where the writings and the doctrine of the great ascetics and mystics of the Orthodox Church, such as Macarius, St. John Climacos, St. Symeon the New Theologian, etc., do not merely constitute an object of purely theoretical study and investigation by a few highly specialized patristic and Byzantine scholars. On Mount Athos the works of these saints are spiritual realities, something to be lived by our entire personality, are indeed our daily spiritual bread. I remember a talk which once I had on Athos with a German professor. He asked me what kind of books the monks read most. I named various ascetic authors and among them St. John Climacos. "How," said the professor with astonishment, "in Germany only a very few highly educated persons are able to read John Climacos. Your monks must be very learned persons!" The professor could not understand that, when anybody belongs to a living tradition, he does not require great theoretical knowledge in order to

understand writings, which express this tradition. And in fact many unlearned monks of Athos can read and understand not only Climacos, but even Isaac of Nineveh and St. Symeon the New Theologian. It is a fact of the highest importance that the ascetic tradition of the Orthodox Church is kept alive on Mount Athos. In order to appreciate this at its true value we must remember that the great majority of modern Orthodox theologians completely ignore this tradition. They do not take even a theoretical interest in Orthodox mysticism, such as is now often shown by many western scholars. They are ignorant of the very names of our great mystics, venerated as saints by the Orthodox Church. Regretfully, nearly the same must be said of some of the modern Christian movements in Greece and, I suppose, in other Orthodox countries as well. I refer to such movements as "Zoë," "Aktines," etc., which concentrate their attention on missionary work, on preaching, and on an active life in general. No doubt they have done good and meritorious work in their field. But their aloofness to the Orthodox spiritual tradition, of mental prayer and of the contemplative life in general, gives to all these movements a certain shallowness, which leaves many of their younger and sincere members spiritually unsatisfied. Thus, I remember, how a young deacon in Athens, formerly a monk of the Holy Mountain, complained to me of the spiritual emptiness, which he felt in the midst of all his activities, as a member of one of these Christian movements. "And the worst is," added he, "that none of my leaders understand me." He would have been glad to go back to the Holy Mountain. Certainly a closer contact between the modern Christian movements and the spiritual tradition of the Orthodox Church would help these movements very much in their work of restoring confession and spiritual direction among the laity. It is here that Athos could act a most important part.

Much more important than the mere preservation of an ascetical tradition are the spiritual fruits of it. These can be briefly defined as holiness, which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Here lies the only real justification for monastic life. Can one find holiness on Athos in our time? It is difficult for a contemporary to give an objective answer to this question. Final judgment belongs only to the Church. I can merely state in a few words my own personal conviction. There are even now on Mount Athos many men of high spiritual life and of a real holiness. During the years I lived on Athos I met many persons who deeply impressed me by the manifest presence in them of the grace of the Holy Spirit. This fact is for me beyond doubt. And I may add, that except on Athos I have never elsewhere met persons of such visible illumination by grace. They were monks of many nationalities, both cœnobites and anchorites. As an example of such a holy man, fragrant with the grace of the Holy Spirit, I can mention a monk of St. Panteleimon's monastery, the Father Silvan, who died 12 years ago.[32] His whole life was stamped with the seal of holiness expressed in his profound humility and love for mankind. He was, perhaps, the only

[32] See *Elder Silvan*, the remarkable book on him by Rev. Sophrony Saharov, Paris, 1950 (in Russian).

man whom I have ever known who never condemned his fellow-creatures. He certainly had a rich interior mystical life. Like many others on Athos he possessed the gift of unceasing mental prayer. A peasant by origin, without any secular education, he acquired exceptional spiritual wisdom. Everybody who had the privilege to converse with him was easily aware of this. He was one of those persons who could tell you exactly what you spiritually needed. After his death he left on record some of his thoughts and meditations. Their style may be somewhat crude, but they make a deep impression by their sincerity and personal character. They sometimes reach the height of ancient mystical writings. Many persons have been profoundly influenced by personal contact with Father Silvan. The whole course of their lives has been changed after their acquaintance with him.

I suppose that the real destiny of Mount Athos is to produce such manifestations of holiness as (among others) the late Father Silvan. So long as this continues the existence of the holy mountain is justified and its traditional place in the spiritual life of the Orthodox Church as a centre of holiness shall be preserved just as in ancient time.

HIEROMONK BASIL KRIVOCHEINE
of the Monastery St. Panteleimon on Mount Athos

Oxford, 1952

THE LITURGICAL MOVEMENT AND EASTERN CHRISTENDOM

by THE REV. PETER HAMMOND

DR. JOHN COVEL, Chaplain to Sir Daniel Harvey, King Charles's ambassador at the Sublime Porte, looked, it must be confessed, with a somewhat jaundiced eye upon the liturgical performances of the Greeks of Constantinople, " the Jolly Easterlings," as he styles them. Not for him the wondering awe of the emissaries of the Prince of Kiev who, seven centuries earlier, had been present in the great church of the Holy Wisdom at the Divine Liturgy of our Father among the saints John Chrysostom, and had not known whether they were on earth or in heaven by reason of its surpassing splendour. " A miserable Jumble, or patcht Piece of Service," says Covel; " so confused and so tedious, as it takes away all Devotion "; not to be compare with the chaste dignity of that incomparable liturgy whose compilers " with wonderful Prudence and sound Judgment did *distinguish*, or rather, as I may say, garble the Offices of *Greeks* and *Latins*; and retaining and adding only such Things as might promote true Piety and primitive Devotion, did cast away all the rest. . . ."

When due allowance has been made, however, for these prejudices (which Covel shares with most Frankish divines and travellers of his generation), there is no gainsaying the substantial accuracy of his assertion that " the greatest part of the Easterlings' Economy and Discipline, especially of the Greeks," consists first in what he calls " their Pomp and amusing Ceremonies at their Liturgies and other Offices . . . and in celebrating their Fasts and Feasts."

Nobody who has lived and worshipped among Greek Christians for any length of time but has sensed in some measure the extraordinary hold which the recurring cycle of the Church's liturgy has upon the piety of the people. Nobody who has kept the great Lent with the Greek Church, who has shared in the fast which lies heavy upon the whole nation for 40 days; who has stood for long hours, one of an innumerable multitude who crowd the tiny Byzantine churches and overflow into the streets, while the familiar pattern of God's saving economy toward man is re-presented in psalm and prophecy, in readings from the Gospels and in the matchless poetry of the canons; who has known the desolation of the Holy and Great Friday, when every bell in Greece tolls its lament and the body of the Saviour lies shrouded in flowers in all the village churches throughout the land; who has been present at the kindling of the new fire and tasted of the joy of a world released from the bondage of sin and death—none can have lived through all this and not have realized that for the Greek Christian the Gospel is inseparably linked with the liturgy which is unfolded week by week in his parish church. Not among Greeks only but throughout Orthodox Christendom the liturgy has remained at the very heart of the Church's life.

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What the west commonly knows as the liturgical movement bears witness to a very different state of affairs. No part of western Christendom but has succumbed in greater or lesser degree to the assaults of a spirit profoundly opposed to that which has ever been characteristic of the Orthodox Christian's approach to the mysteries of the Faith. The prayer of the Church no longer shapes and controls the piety of the common people as in former days. Liturgy has become separated from dogma and then, inevitably, from spirituality also. The Eucharist—the corporate action wherein every member of the organic Body has its appropriate liturgy to perform—has become clericalized: has come to be thought of as the act of one member acting on behalf of the whole Body. Many who reverence the Bible as the Word of God forget that the treasures of the divine scriptures are revealed only to the worshipping *ecclesia* in whose liturgy they are embedded as in a frame. Holy Tradition has given place to "the traditions," the Church—One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic—has been superseded by "the churches." Every fragment of a shattered Christendom has its private *lex orandi* born of isolation and bearing the marks of controversies which are in their turn the bitter legacy of schism and partial vision; while personal devotion—no longer subject to the control of the liturgy—has brought forth strange fruit; and a theology divorced from worship has come to be regarded as a barren science of the intellect: an appropriate discipline for scholars and specialists but utterly irrelevant to the life of the ordinary man or woman doing daily battle against the threefold enemy.

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The liturgical movement is at bottom a reassertion of the true nature of the liturgy and of its place in the life of the Church. It springs from a

recovered vision of the wholeness of theology, and from the realization that dogma and scripture can never be isolated from the living liturgical tradition of the worshipping community without serious impoverishment and distortion. All over western Christendom to-day this movement is exerting its influence—sometimes in very unexpected quarters; and while it is to Roman Catholic monks and scholars that we owe the most profound restatement of truths which eastern Christendom has never permitted to become obscured, the liturgical movement (to use the term in its widest sense) has also extended in some measure to French Calvinists, to German Lutherans, and to others no less distant from Old Rome. Ultimately it is concerned with fundamental theological issues, and not merely with what is commonly known as liturgiology—with the purifying of the ecclesiastical chant, the cut of a chasuble or the position of the celebrant at the holy table. For though it *has* been concerned with all these things the secret of its growing power lies deeper and is inextricably bound up with the rediscovery of a truly biblical theology, and of the fact that the ancient Fathers are not so dead as some would have them be.

One is not infrequently asked what are the main points of difference between eastern and western Christendom, in terms which make it quite evident that one's questioner is thinking of particular doctrinal propositions. It can hardly be too strongly emphasized, however, that the manifest cleavage which now exists between Orthodox and all other Christians lies less in the field of disagreement over specific doctrinal issues than in the fact of two widely divergent attitudes and approaches. To say this is not in any sense to deny the reality and importance of certain purely doctrinal questions (that of the *filioque* in particular) but merely to assert that it is not there that the *primary* differences are to be sought.

The truth of this contention is borne out by certain recent developments in western Christendom. The combined influence of the liturgical movement and a return to a genuinely theological approach to biblical exegesis have brought about in some very diverse quarters a radically changed attitude toward the fundamental nature of the Christian *mystery*; an attitude which has at times come very close to that which has ever been characteristic of eastern Christendom—though there is nothing peculiarly *eastern* about it. When this change of attitude has most markedly appeared it has gone far towards creating a genuine *rapprochement* between theologians of east and west: much farther, I would add, than any amount of discussion of specific doctrinal issues where no such common approach exists.

The Orthodox Christian's approach to the mysteries of the Faith is fundamentally liturgical. The truth of the dogmas proclaimed by the councils is made actual in the personal experience of every Christian in so far as he is a lively member of the worshipping and adoring Body. That truth can never be fully revealed save to the Christian who has been made a member of Christ, who has himself become the temple of the life-giving Spirit, the dwelling-place of the Holy Trinity. The profound depths of the divine economy of redemption are gradually and, so to say,

" mysteriously " laid bare as the Christian enters more and more fully into the hidden life of the Church. *Orthodoxy* is not so much a matter of " right opinion " about God as of " right worship " of Him.

There is, notwithstanding its naivety, a deep significance in the legend concerning the emissaries of the Prince of Kiev, to which I have already referred. That monarch, so the story runs, wishing to make Christianity, the religion of his people but uncertain which of its various manifestations was the true one, sent envoys to distant lands that they might judge for themselves. The envoys went first to the heretical Bulgars. They observed the way in which the people worshipped: how they bowed themselves to the earth and gazed hither and thither like men possessed. But, alas! " There is no joy among them," they reported on their return to Kiev, " but only sadness and an appalling smell! " The emissaries went next to the fringes of Latin Christendom, but the worship of the Franks seems to have made little impression upon them. Thence, however, they journeyed to Byzantium, and were taken to the divine liturgy in the great church of Justinian; and there, they afterwards related, " We did not know if we were on earth or in heaven; for there is no such splendour to be found anywhere upon earth. Describe it we cannot; we know only that it is there that God dwells amongst men."

" Let the Christian consider well when he enters the church " (writes the compiler of a Greek *Synopsis* printed at Venice in 1857), " that he is entering into another heaven. The same majesty of God which is in heaven is also in His church, and on this account the Christian must needs enter with reverence and fear."

For the Orthodox Christian the humblest village church is always *heaven upon earth*: the place where men and women, according to their capacity and desire, are caught up into the adoring worship of a redeemed cosmos; where dogmas are no barren abstractions but hymns of exulting praise, and the saving acts of God's economy toward man, the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection on the third day and the Ascension into the heavenly places, are made present and actual through the operation of the Holy Spirit, who " ever was, and is, and shall be; having neither beginning nor ending, but for ever joined to and numbered with the Father and the Son . . . through whom the Father is known and the Son is glorified and by all acknowledged, one Power, one Order, and one Worship of the Holy Trinity."

Once one grasps this essentially liturgical approach one is in possession of the key to the Orthodox Christian's understanding of scripture, of personal devotion and of the dogmatic definitions of the Church. Here too lies the secret of the preservation of tradition in Greece during the long centuries of Turkish dominion. Paul Rycaut, who was British Consul at Smyrna about the time that Covel was nicely catechizing his Greek acquaintances at Constantinople as to their supposed adherence to the scholastic doctrine of transubstantiation, was sensible of this power of liturgical tradition. " And whereas now," he writes in 1679, " the ancient Structures and Colleges of Athens are become ruinous, and only a fit

habitation for its own Owle, and all Greece poor and illiterate," it is yet "admirable to see with what Constancy, Resolution and Simplicity, ignorant and poor men keep their Faith." And, he continues, "if any Art or Polity can be said to have place over the affection of the People; none seems more efficacious than the strict observation of the Fasts and Feasts of their Church, by which the people are taught as in a visible *Catechism* . . . more (I dare say) than by their ill-composed Sermons, or repetition of the Scriptures in the Vulgar Tongue; for being severely imposed, and observed with much solemnity, they affect the Vulgar with an awe of something divine and extraordinary in them."

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Now what I have called the liturgical approach to the Christian mystery has always been characteristic of eastern Christendom. There is, nevertheless, (and this is a matter of some importance), nothing peculiarly *eastern* about it. The Christian Hellenism of the Greek Fathers which stamps it so plainly belongs not merely to eastern Christendom but to the treasury common to all Catholic Christians: Latin and English, Arab and Chinese, as well as Greek. It would in fact not be difficult to illustrate all the main features of this liturgical approach from exclusively western sources, whether patristic or contemporary.

There is indeed much misunderstanding in this matter. Even among those who, through personal friendship perhaps, have come to know something of the life and worship of eastern Christendom, there frequently persists a stubborn if largely unformulated conviction that one has of course to remember that Orthodoxy is, after all, *eastern*, and, this being so, bears little relation to our own problems. All too commonly a certain dabbling in Orthodoxy is looked upon as a delightful hobby having an agreeable spice of novelty, but which it would be quite ridiculous to suppose had any urgent relevance to our own condition; an amiable eccentricity which may appropriately occupy the leisure hours of a few clergymen of a scholarly turn of mind, and which from time to time brings picturesque and exotic visitors to enliven for a few days the tranquil atmosphere of country parishes, but which is about as relevant to the conversion of England to the Catholic Faith as astrology or the revival of the Cornish language.

Such an attitude is not difficult to comprehend if we bear in mind the fact that Orthodoxy has been re-presented to the west arrayed (more often than not) in a gorgeous vesture of Slavonic cut; a vesture which the ordinary Englishman not unreasonably holds to be alien to his own outlook and tastes, albeit picturesque and not without a certain exotic charm. Unfortunately, it has all too frequently been precisely those elements in modern Russian Orthodoxy which bear the stamp of a particular age and setting (and which the Greek or Arab Christian, no less than the English Churchman, feel to be wholly exotic) which have been assumed to be peculiarly Orthodox by those whose knowledge of eastern Christendom is derived mainly or exclusively from the Christians of the Russian *diaspora*.

An inevitable consequence has been that many English Churchmen, taking the accidents for the substance, have more often than not failed to

penetrate the unfamiliar array to the common Christianity which lies beneath it; and have built up for themselves a picture of the Orthodox Church in which flowing beards and imperfectly apprehended expositions of *sobornost* are elements of vastly greater importance than the Faith once delivered to the saints.

Much the same is true in the field of theology. There are those who seek the essential features of Orthodoxy in the works of writers such as Khomiakov and Solovyov when they might with greater profit turn to the writings of the Fathers and the ancient liturgies: to the treasure house which belongs to Catholic Christendom as a whole and not to any one people or age. Anyone who is called to reinterpret the life and worship of eastern Christendom to the west, must needs touch upon many matters which to the ordinary Englishman will inevitably seem strange and picturesque, and we should do well to insist in season and out of season that Orthodoxy does not stand in these things but in living in the Faith; the Faith which is enshrined in the prayer of the Church and is summed up for all men and for all ages in the Nicene symbol and the tremendous paradoxes of Chalcedon.

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Now it is evident that in many parts of eastern Christendom to-day there exists a vigorous movement for liturgical reform. One need only compare the manner in which the Divine Mysteries are celebrated in a village church of Thessaly or Macedonia with that which obtains in churches served by priests of the *Apostoliki Diakonia,* for example, or in the chapels of *the Brotherhood of Theologians, Zoë,* to realize something of the progress that has been made within the last few years. And yet, when all is said as to this liturgical movement within the bounds of eastern Christendom, the fact remains that the very limitations in the scope of the issues at stake only serve to emphasize that the Orthodox Church has never lost her hold upon certain truths which we in western Europe are only now, after long centuries of neglect, beginning to recover: to underline Dom Olivier Rousseau's remark that for the Orthodox Church there can be no question of a liturgical movement, since her piety has never deviated from her worship. Orthodox Christendom has never undergone an upheaval comparable to that which shattered the unity of the western world in the sixteenth century, not on account of the glacier of Turkish dominion which descended upon it a hundred years earlier, but because it had never known that separation of theology and mysticism, Christian truth and Christian experience, which—when all is said as to the influence of political and economic factors—is required to explain the all-engulfing cataclysm of the Reformation.

Orthodox theologians are prone to refer to their Church as that of the seven ecumenical councils: to recall the west (Catholic and Protestant alike) to the tradition of the undivided Church. We are inclined to be suspicious of such expressions, seeming as they do to savour of a somewhat static and artificial conception of ecclesiastical tradition. All tradition, we assert, must inevitably be a living, organic thing. It does not consist of a

series of layers—like the skins in which years of "painting ship" in season and out of season have shrouded every vessel in the Royal Navy—layers which may be chipped away at will until a long-obscured ground is laid bare whereupon a fresh start can be made. Whether we like it or not, we find ourselves within a given historical situation, and—in this sense at any rate—it is merely academic to talk of a *return* to tradition. We cannot, if we would, put the clock back: we have to accept the situation in which we find ourselves.

Now this is true enough, so far as it goes, and yet, as I have already emphasized, the gulf now separating the Orthodox world from the rest of Christendom consists less in disagreement over specific doctrinal issues than in a radically different approach to the Christian mystery considered as a whole. It is not that east and west disagree: they no longer have a common language. The tradition from which, so the Orthodox would maintain, the west has strayed is not so much a matter of a static body of teaching belonging to a particular age, as of a living, adoring orthodoxy wherein dogma is inextricably embedded in the prayer of the Church: an orthodoxy which is neither eastern nor western, Greek nor Latin.

We have in time past all too frequently been content to dismiss as *eastern* much that in truth belongs to the heritage common to all catholic Christians, and our catholicity and our presentation of the Gospel to our fellow-countrymen has to this extent become partial and impoverished. And yet there is nothing peculiarly oriental about that approach to the mysteries of the Faith which I have asserted to be characteristic of the Orthodox Christian: none of its fundamental characteristics which cannot equally well be illustrated from western sources of the prescholastic period or from contemporary western writers who have come within the sphere of influence of the liturgical movement.

Herein lies the significance of the movement. The wholeness of catholic tradition is in process of recovery, and in every part of western Christendom we see the Church reclaiming as her own that approach to the Christian mystery which, in its essentials, was shared by St. Bernard and Leo the Great no less than by St. Athanasius and Maximus the Confessor: laying hold anew upon those elements of a common orthodoxy which are still latent within the western tradition though they have lain hidden and almost forgotten these many centuries.

AN IDYLL OF THE MONKS OF GAZA

IN THE EARLY YEARS OF JUSTINIAN

ABOUT the time when St. Benedict was founding his monastery on Monte Cassino, a cœnobium of a different type was flourishing in the Gaza plain, near the village of Thavatha where St. Hilarion, two centuries earlier, had introduced the monastic life into the Holy Land. Here two Old Men, the Egyptian Varsanuphius and his disciple John, were living as solitaries, though in close connection with the Community, giving their answers to questions from a great diversity of people, religious and secular, on all kinds of matters related to the Spiritual Life. They would see no

one but the Abbot, Seridus, or the monk attendant upon them, and questions and answers had to be transmitted through the medium of the Abbot. The two Old Men were the real spiritual heads of the Community, to whom the Abbot, a much younger man, would refer all matters of importance—for the east has always normally given primacy to the solitary life, treating the cœnobitic way as a preparation thereto. A collection of well over 800 of their answers has survived, and an edition of these was prepared by the Athonite monk Nikodemos, and published in Venice in 1816, some six years after his death. But this edition is practically unobtainable in western Europe, with the result that, apart from short extracts found in Migne (PG. 86 and 88), the work is known to very few scholars outside the Orthodox East.[1]

Not long after the great Plague of A.D. 542, the Abbot Seridus died, followed quickly to the grave by the "Other Old Man" John: and the "Great Old Man" Varsanuphius retired into complete silence. One of their disciples, Dorotheus, now went off to found his own monastery elsewhere. His works are more accessible, being published in Migne (PG. 88). But the story here translated of his earliest disciple, though found in MSS among his works, is not published with them in Migne. The text was published, with a French translation, in *Orientalia Christiana*, XXVI (1932), pp. 89–123.[2] It is a true picture, not only of sixth century monastic life, but of the spirit which has continued to distinguish Orthodox monasticism down to the present day.

To give a more stereoscopic character to the picture, I have appended to my translation extracts from the works of the Old Men concerning the deaths of two brethren. The second of these may perhaps be concerned with Dositheus himself. D.J.C.

Concerning the Abba Dositheus

The truly blessed Abba Dorotheus, aspiring with God's help to the monastic life, made his withdrawal to the Cœnobium of Abba Seridus: where he found some plenty of great ascetics living in quiet; among whom were two great Old Men, the most holy Varsanuphius, and his disciple or fellow-ascetic, the Abba John, called the Prophet because of the gift of clairvoyancy which he had from God. To these he gave himself up with all assurance: and with the great Old Man he would hold converse through Abba Seridus, who is among the saints; while he himself was actually deemed worthy to minister to Abba John the Prophet.

While the blessed Abba Dorotheus was still in the Cœnobium of Abba Seridus, and carrying through the contest of Christian subjection, the holy Old Men decided that he should make there an infirmary and have the

[1] The present writer hopes in due course to be able to publish a new critical edition of the whole work.

[2] A Latin translation was made at Monte Cassino in the twelfth century. It was again translated in the sixteenth century, and by Corderius in his *Editio Prima* of the Greek (1646), which was reprinted in *Acta Sanctorum*, Febr. III, p. 380ff. Two French translations were made in the seventeenth century, and the Abbé de Rancé (founder of the Trappists) made extensive use of it for a Life of St. Dorotheus prefixed to his translation of the works of the latter.

care of it. For the brethren were in great toils when they were sick, having no one to look after them. So with God's help he made the infirmary, his own brother according to the flesh providing him with the means—for this man was a great Christ-lover and lover of monks. And there was the Abba Dorotheus himself, with some other pious brethren, as I have said, tending the sick. But he himself had the care of the administration of all this.

One day the hegoumen, Abba Seridus, sent for him. And when he came he found with him a young man in soldier's uniform, as smart and handsome as could be. This young man had just come to the monastery with some friends of the Abbot in the Duke's service. So, when the Abba Dorotheus came, the Abbot himself took him aside and said to him, " These men have brought this lad here saying that he wants to remain here in the monastery : and I am afraid that perhaps he belongs to one of these great men, and has stolen or done something, and we shall find ourselves in trouble : for neither his fashion nor his appearance is that of one who wants to become a monk."

This young man had been a certain general's *deliciæ*, living in great luxury—for the *deliciæ* of such men are always in great indolence—and he had never heard a word of God. But some of the general's men related in his hearing about the Holy City, and he conceived a desire to see what was there. So he asked the general to send him to visit the Holy Places. The general, not wanting to grieve him, found a true friend of his who was going thither, and said to him, " Do me a favour, and take this lad with you to visit the Holy Places!" He, in view of the fact that he had received the boy from a general, treated him with all honour and comfort, letting him have his meals with himself and his wife. When they had come to the Holy City, and were making their devotions at the Holy Places, they came to Gethsemane. And there was there the representation of Hell. As the lad was standing looking at it and amazed, he sees a worshipful woman wearing purple garments standing near him, and pointing out to him each of the damned ; and she was admonishing him in some other ways also as from herself : and the boy hearing them from her was struck dumb with wonder : for as I said, he had never heard a word of God, or that there is a Judgment. So he says to her, " Lady, what shall a man do to escape these punishments ? " She answered him, " Fast, and do not eat meat, and pray continually, and you will escape the punishments." After giving him these three injunctions, she appeared to him no more, but vanished.

From then on the boy remained pricked in conscience, keeping these three injunctions which she had given him. But the general's friend, when he saw him fasting and not eating meat, was distressed because of the general : for he knew that he held the boy as something of great importance. But the soldiers who were with him, seeing him in such conduct, said to him, " Child, these things you are doing do not belong to a man who wants to be in the world : if this is what you want, go to a monastery, and you will save your soul." But he did not know anything at all in the way of God, nor even what a monastery is. Only he was keeping what he had heard. So he says to them, " Take me where you know : for I do not

know anywhere to go." Some of them, as I have said, were friends of Abba Seridus. And they came to the monastery bringing the boy with them.

So when the Abbot sent the blessed Dorotheus to speak to him, he questioned the boy closely. And he knew nothing else to say but only "I want to be saved." So he comes and says to the Abbot, "If altogether you decide to accept him, do not be afraid, for there is nothing bad in him." The Abbot says to him, "Well then, do me a charity, and take him to be with you, for his salvation: for I do not want him to be in the midst of the brethren." But he out of godly fear continued excusing himself and saying, "It is beyond my condition to undertake the burden of any man, and it belongs not to my measure." The Abbot says to him, "I bear your burden and his: what have you to be distressed about?" Then he says to him, "Well, then, since this is certainly your judgment, if you think good, refer it to the Old Man." He says to him, "Very well, I will tell the Old Man." The Old Man declared to him, "Accept him: for it is by you that God is going to save him." Then he accepted him with joy, and had him with him in the infirmary. His name was called Dositheus. When the time came for eating, he said to him, "Eat to be filled, only mark how much you eat." He came saying to him, "I ate one and a half loaves."—The loaf was of four pounds[3]—He says to him, "Are you well, Dositheus?" He answers, "Yes, Sir, I am well." He says to him, "You are not hungry?" He says, "No, Master, I am not hungry." Then he says to him, "Well then, eat the one loaf, and the quarter of the other loaf, and divide the second quarter into two, and eat the half." And he did thus. He says to him, "Are you hungry, Dositheus?" And he answers, "Yes, Sir, I am a little hungry." After a few days, again he says to him, "How are you, Dositheus? Are you still hungry?" He says, "No, Sir, by your prayers I am well." He says to him, "Well then, take away the other half of the quarter." And he did so. Again after a few days he says to him, "How are you now? You are not hungry?" He answers, "I am well, Sir." He says to him, "Divide the other quarter into two, and eat the half and leave the half." And he did likewise. And so with God's help little by little he came down from six pounds to eight ounces. For in deed habituation comes in even in eating.

This lad was very apt at any work that he did! He used to serve the sick in the infirmary, and each one was well content at his service. For he did everything cleanly. But if it happened that he got bored with one of the sick, and spoke a word with anger, he would leave every thing, and go into the cellar weeping. When the other servants of the infirmary came in to comfort him, and he would not be entreated, they would come and say to the Abba Dorotheus, "Do a charity, Sir, and find out what is the matter with this brother; because he is weeping, and we do not know why." And he would come in, and find him sitting on the ground weeping, and would say to him, "What is it, Dositheus? What is the matter? Why are you weeping?" And he would say, "Forgive me, Sir, I was angry, and spoke

[3] The Roman pound of twelve ounces.

ill to my brother." And he would say to him, "Yes, Dositheus, since you are angry, yes, and are you not ashamed at being angry and speaking ill to your brother? Do you not know that it is Christ Himself, and you are distressing the Christ?" And he would cast his face downwards, weeping and saying nothing. But when he saw that he had wept enough, he would say to him, "Then God will forgive you: get up: from now let us make a beginning: let us try hard for the future, and God will help us." At once when he heard that, he would get up and run to his service with joy, as knowing that he had received the forgiveness from God. So the people of the infirmary learnt his custom. And when they saw him weeping, they would say, "Something is the matter with Dositheus: he has slipped up somewhere." And they would say to the blessed Dorotheus, "Sir, go into the cellar, for you have a work there." So when he went in and found him sitting on the ground weeping, he would understand that he had spoken a word ill, and would say to him, "What is it, Dositheus? Have you again distressed Christ? Have you again been angry? Are you not ashamed? Will you not correct yourself for the future?" And he would continue weeping. Again when he saw that he had had his fill of weeping, he would say, "Get up, God will forgive you: again make a beginning: correct yourself for the future." And he at once with faith would shake off that grief, and go off to his work.

He used to make the beds for the sick very well indeed. But he was so free and outspoken in regard to his thoughts, that often while he was putting the finishing touches to the beds, he saw the blessed man passing, and would say to him, "Sir, Sir, my thought tells me, 'You make the beds well.'" And Dorotheus would answer, "*Vavai*, Sir! Here you are a good slave: you have become a good *brencarius*[4]: but are you a good monk?" And he never allowed him to be partial to a matter, or to any object whatever. For he would receive everything with joy and with faith, and was eagerly obedient in everything. And when he needed a garment, he would give him one, and he would go off and mend it with great aptitude and finish. And after he had done it, Dorotheus would call him and say to him, "Dositheus, have you mended that garment?" And he would say, "Yes, Sir, and I have finished it off beautifully." And he would say, "Go and give it to such and such a brother, or such and such a patient." And he would go off and give it to him with readiness. Again he would give him another, and in the same way after he had mended it and finished it off, he would say to him, "Give it to such and such a brother." And at once he would give it. And he was never distressed, nor grumbled, saying, "After I have toiled at mending it and finishing it off, he takes it from me and gives it to another." But every good thing which he heard he would do with eagerness.

Another time, one of the commissioners brought a very fine and shapely knife. And he took it and brought it to Abba Dorotheus saying, "Such and such a brother has brought this knife: and I took it so that if you so

[4] This word is only found once elsewhere, and its meaning is a matter for conjecture.

order we may have it in the infirmary, because it is good for cutting the dressings." But that blessed man never possessed any shapely object in the infirmary more than what was fitting. So he says to him, "Come, let me see if it is good." He gave it him saying, "Yes, Sir, it is good for the dressings." He looked at it and saw for himself too that it was indeed good for that matter. But since he did not want him to have a partiality to any material object whatever, he did not want him to keep it. So he says to him, "Dositheus, is that how it pleases you? Do you want to be the slave of this knife and not the slave of God? Yes, Dositheus, it pleases you to be bound to partiality for this knife, and are you not ashamed that you want this knife to be your master, and not God?" And he hearing did not toss up his head, but cast his face downwards in silence. Afterwards after he had continued accusing him, he said to him, "Go, put it away and do not touch it." And so strictly did he keep the command not to touch it, that he would not even ever hand it to anyone, but while the other servants used it, he alone would not go near it. And he never said, "What am I, forsooth, different from all the others?" but everything he heard he would do with joy.

So he accomplished the short time that he spent in the monastery. For he spent there about five years, and so came to his end in obedience, not having wrought his own will in anything at all, nor having done anything out of partiality. But when he fell sick, and spat blood—for he died of consumption—he heard from somebody that lightly boiled eggs help those who spit blood. The blessed Dorotheus also knew this, and would have been glad to employ the treatment: but as a result of distraction it did not come into his mind. So the other said to him, "Sir, I want to tell you that I have heard about a thing that would help me. But I do not want you to give me of it, since my thought troubles me." He says to him, "Tell me what it is, Dositheus: tell me what the thing is." And he says, "Give me your word that you will not give it me, since, as I said, my thought troubles me about it." He says to him, "Very well, I will do as you want." Then he says to him, "I have heard from some men that lightly boiled eggs help those who spit blood. But for the Lord's sake, if you will so order, since you were not first to give it me of yourself, do not give it me, for the sake of my thought." He says to him, "Very well, since you do not want it, I will not give it you: only do not be distressed." But he studied to give him other things instead of the eggs which would help him. See how even in such a sickness he was struggling against his own will.

But he had also always mindfulness of God. For Dorotheus had delivered to him the practice of always saying, "Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon me: Son of God, help me." So at all times he had this prayer. But when he fell sick, Dorotheus said to him, "Dositheus, take care of the prayer: see you do not lose it." And he answered, "Very well, Sir: pray for me." Again when he grew a little worse, he said to him, "What now, Dositheus? How is the prayer? Does it still stand?" And he says, "Yes, Sir, through your prayers." But when he grew worse still—for he came to such sickness that he was carried in a sheet—he says

to him, "How is the prayer, Dositheus?" Then he says, "Forgive me, Sir, I have no longer strength to hold it." He says to him, "Well then, leave the prayer: only remember God, and look at Him as being before your face."

He was in great travail, and informed the Great Old Man, "Dismiss me, for I am no longer able." The Old Man informs him, "Endure, my child, for the mercy of God is near." But the blessed Dorotheus saw him labouring, and was anxious lest he should suffer hurt. Again after a few days he informed the Old Man, "Master, I have not strength any longer." Then the Old Man informed him, "Go in peace: stand before the Holy Trinity, and intercede for us."

When the brethren heard the Old Man's dismissal, they began to be vexed and to say, "What has he done, forsooth, or what is his work, that he received such a message?" For they were not wont to see him either fasting two days at a time, as some there did, or awake before the Vigil—in fact, not even at the Vigil itself would he get up until two offices were finished—nor did they see him performing any ascetic practice. But they used to see him eating any little soup there might chance to be from the sick, and if there should be left over one little fish's head, or some other such thing. And there were some there, as I have said, for so great a time fasting every other day, and making double vigils, and practising asceticism. So when they heard that such an answer had been sent by the Old Man to a lad who had only been five years in the monastery, they were troubled, not knowing his work, and his obedience in all things—how he never did a thing according to his own will—and his undiscriminating obedience—how if it should chance that the blessed Dorotheus should ever say a word to him as in scolding him, he would go off at a run and do it without discrimination. This is the kind of thing I mean—This lad used at the beginning to speak rather harshly, as from habit. So the blessed man scolding him one day said, "What you need is a *buccacratum*,[5] Dositheus: very well, go and take a *buccacratum*." He on hearing this, goes off and brings a bowl with bread and wine and gives it to him as to receive a blessing. Dorotheus, not understanding, looked at him in perplexity and said, "What do you want?" He answers, "Since you told me to take a *buccacratum*, give me a blessing." Then he says to him, "You fool, since you shout just like the Goths—for they too, when they are angry, rage and shout—that is why I said to you, 'Take a *buccacratum*,' because you also talk like a Goth." Dositheus when he heard it, made a penitence, and went off and put it away.

Another time again he comes and asks him about a word of Scripture. But Dorotheus did not want him for the time to turn his mind to these matters, but rather to be preserved through humiliation. So when he questioned him, he told him, "I do not know." He, not perceiving what he meant, comes again and questions him about another chapter. Then

[5] Βουκάκρατον, a hybrid Latin-and-Greek word, is used once elsewhere of the bread and wine given by Melchisedek to Abraham. Here it is to be understood with reference to the *buccella*, or ration given to soldiers in the employment of private individuals at this period, who were known from it as *buccellarii*. No doubt they would often be Goths.

he says to him, "I do not know: but go off and ask the Abbot." He went off making no difference. But Dorotheus had told the Abbot beforehand apart from him, "If Dositheus comes to you to ask you anything from Scripture, be a bit sharp with him." So when he went and questioned him, he began to be sharp with him and say, "Will you not be quiet when you know nothing? Do you dare to ask such questions? Have you no care for your own uncleanness?" And with other such words he dismissed him, having given him two buffets. He returns to the Abba Dorotheus, showing his cheeks crimson from the buffets, and saying, "I have a firm pair of cheeks." And he did not say, "Why did you not correct me yourself, in stead of sending me to the Abbot?" No such thing, but he accepted everything from him with faith, and carried it out without discrimination. And when he questioned him about a thought, he would accept what he heard with such conviction, and so keep it, as no more to come to him a second time about the same thought.

It was, as I have said, in ignorance of this wonderful work of his, that some were grumbling at his dismissal by the Old Man. But when God wanted to make manifest the glory that had been prepared for him from that holy obedience, and the gift that the blessed Abba Dorotheus had even when he was still a disciple for the salvation of souls, he who had been allowed in such unerring and summary manner to guide him to God—then, no long time after his blessed end, one of the saints, a great Old Man, coming as a foreigner to those parts, desired to see the saints who had already fallen asleep in the Cœnobium, and asked God to reveal them to him. And he saw them standing together as in choir, and among them one young man standing: and he said, "Who is this young man whom I saw with the fathers?" And when he drew the distinguishing marks of his appearance, they all recognized that it was Dositheus, and they glorified God, amazed that coming from such a life and such a first conduct, he had been deemed worthy to attain to such a measure, and in so short a time, by his holding to obedience, and cutting short his own will.

For all these things let us send up glory to God the Lover of man, now and ever and to the ages of the ages. Amen.

From the Answers of Varsanuphius about the Deaths of Two Brethren

144.—*The same brother falling into sickness, and suspecting that he was going to die, asked the same Great Old Man with much humility about forgiveness of sins, and about endurance in the disease unto the end. And the Old Man answered thus:*

Be not grieved, brother. For death without sins is not death, but migration from affliction to rest, from darkness to the unutterable Light and to the Life eternal. Jesus the great King says to thee, "All thy sins are forgiven thee"; chiefly through the prayers and supplications of the Saints, and for thy faith in Him: may He grant thee the endurance unto the end.

145.—*Of the Same to the same Great Old Man:—My Lord Father, I am in God's hands and thine. Perform then thy mercy with me unto the*

end, and make haste to dismiss me, entrusting me to my Master Christ, and guiding me by thy holy prayers, escorting me through the air and this road that I know not.

Answer:—

To God who deigned to die for us, the Master of heaven and earth and of everything that hath breath, I entrust thee, brother, that He may assuage before thee the fear of death, and make unhindered the ascent of thy soul, and that thou mayest worship with boldness the Holy Trinity—that is to say, set free, but fearing and trembling like the angels: and that He may give thee rest with His Saints. Go then, and pray for me.

146.—*Another brother was sick, falling into a consumption, and in great danger: and he besought the same Great Old Man to pray for him, and ask for him forgiveness of sins. And he answered him:—*

Fear not, brother: but rather may thy soul rejoice and be glad in the Lord. And believe me truly, that lo! God has forgiven all thy sins according to thy request, from thy childhood up to this present. Blessed be God whose will it is, that He has forgiven thee all. Be not grieved then. For thou hast no ill. It is pain, and it ceases.

147.—*Again when he became worse, some of the brethren besought the Other Old Man to interpret to them the answer before this, whether the Old Man had spoken about life or about death. And he answered*—" It is about death. But he is able to ask life for him, if he be assured by God."

148.—*Hearing this, they besought the Great Old Man to ask life for him.*

Answer:—

May my God the good and compassionate fill you more and more with the joy of the Holy Spirit. Amen.—But concerning the brother; that is sufficient for him which he has been deemed worthy to receive, that suddenly he is become rich, and a free man from a slave. But blessed be God who has been well pleased to accept the entreaty. Say nothing, then, to the brother, that he be not grieved, but do ye keep the secret. For it is not death for him, but migration from death to Life eternal, and from affliction to rest. Rejoice my beloved children in the Lord.

149.—*When again the brother grew worse, and was in great travail, they besought the same Great Old Man to ask God to work His mercy more swiftly with him.*

Answer:—

For this cause he has remained in the toil, that the prayer which has been made for him might not remain by itself. And God both has wrought and works that which is profitable for him, by the prayers of the Saints. Amen.

And after this answer the brother came to his end in peace.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY THE FAITH PRESS, LTD., LEIGHTON BUZZARD